



**TURNING NEW BELIEVERS INTO  
BEGINNER DISCIPLES**

**John Stone**

First Aid for Converts  
by John Stone  
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[www.firstaidforconverts.com](http://www.firstaidforconverts.com)  
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FOR KING JESUS

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Copies of the *First Aid For Converts* book and the *First Aid for Converts Study Guide* are available in accordance with 1 Corinthians 9:11: "If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?"

If you need our books for your spiritual welfare, know that we need your money for our physical welfare. This is what 1 Corinthians 9:11 means.

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'Buying and selling' is how Christians exchange resources with the world. According to the Bible, 'buying and selling' has never been God's plan for meeting the needs of those of us who dwell in our Father's house, be those needs physical or spiritual.<sup>1</sup>

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May God bless you richly.

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<sup>1</sup> "Buy the truth and do not sell it--wisdom, instruction and insight as well" (Proverbs 23:23 NIV).



## Dear Reader,

The more I understand about Jesus, the more I realize how little I know. His hidden parts exceed whatever sums yet found. Christ is endless.

Because so much truth remains unknown, this little book falls short of the mark. How it falls short, I don't know. I only see in part. I have blind spots. Knowing I have blind spots bothered me as I thought of you reading this book. I don't want to lead you astray. So when I finished writing, I took my concern to Jesus.

"What needs to be written that isn't included?" I asked Him, "What did I write that's wrong?"

In response to my admission of inadequacy it seemed like Jesus said, "You just write what you think you know, John, and I will take care of the rest."

Hearing that made me feel better. With those words Jesus reminded me that He is the Good Shepherd. He can handle my blind spots. He will protect you from my errors and omissions. Besides this, you might already possess insights that make this teaching better. Jesus might show you twice as much as I will ever see.

Whatever Jesus reveals or keeps hidden, I am confident that He will shepherd you safely through this book and more importantly, He will bring you safe and sound through this life to the next.

May this little book bless you on your spiritual journey.

Godspeed,  
John Stone





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# PART ONE

MAKING DISCIPLES



# INTRODUCTION

**A tidal wave of converts will soon roll into the church.<sup>1</sup>**

When that wave comes, turning converts into disciples will be the church's biggest job.<sup>2</sup> This book is an easy-to-use tool to help you do just that—turn Christian converts into beginner disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Converts are not the same as disciples. While both are Christians, they're different. The biggest difference is mindset. A convert has a worldly mindset.<sup>3</sup> A disciple has a spiritual mindset.<sup>4</sup>

In times past some well-meaning Christians thought that turning converts into disciples of their local church or denomination was the same as turning new believers into disciples of Jesus.<sup>5</sup> This misunderstanding has caused grief; and worse, Jesus calls it evil.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Addendum, 'How This Book Got Its Name'

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>3</sup> Jude 1:19; Titus 2:12

<sup>4</sup> Galatians 5:25

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:17-19

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 23:15

Anyone with spiritual eyes can see the difference between a disciple of a church and a disciple of Jesus.<sup>7</sup> The first suffers under a religious spirit. The latter lives by the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

Thankfully turning a convert into a disciple of Jesus is far easier than turning a convert into a disciple of a church. Besides being easy, Jesus calls it praiseworthy.<sup>9</sup>

## Six Elementary Principles

This book gives a basic teaching on the six elementary principles of Christianity listed in Hebrews 6:1-2.

These easy-to-understand principles empower a new believer to start living his or her life with a spiritual mindset. If a convert puts into his heart these basic tenets of our faith then he can hear and follow Jesus.

That's what a disciple is—someone who hears and follows Jesus.

The Bible sometimes calls the six elementary teachings of Christianity 'The Foundational Principles.'<sup>10</sup>

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7 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

8 Romans 8:14

9 1 John 5:3

10 Hebrews 5:12

The Foundational Principles are:

1. Repentance from Dead Works
2. Faith in God
3. Instruction about Baptisms
4. The Laying On of Hands
5. The Resurrection of the Dead and
6. Eternal Judgment

Hebrews 6:1-2, the key scripture for this book, reads like this:

“Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings (baptisms) and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.”<sup>11</sup>

## Go and Make Disciples

Jesus commanded us to “go and make disciples of all the peoples.”<sup>12</sup> Since Jesus gave us this responsibility, He empowers us to do it.<sup>13</sup>

You have the God-given ability to make converts to Christianity into disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>14</sup> This little book will help you. Better yet, Jesus will help you.

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<sup>11</sup> NASB

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 28:18-20

<sup>14</sup> Luke 24:49

**Prayer:**

*Jesus, I want to be Your faithful disciple. If I have made Christians into disciples of a local church or denomination, please forgive me. Help me make disciples who follow only You. Amen.*



# THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONVERTS AND DISCIPLES

## A Clueless Convert

**I did not know I was still a convert when I led a ministry of fifty men in my church.** Worse than that, I did not know I had a worldly mindset. I did not know I was living my life no differently than a godless man. I was clueless.

At that point in time I had been a sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ for three years, but nobody told me that I had not matured into a disciple of Jesus. I was a baby Christian with a worldly mindset and at the same time I was a church leader. How did that happen?

Probably no one in my local church realized I had a worldly way of thinking. I seemed like a good Christian. I thought I was

a good Christian. I prayed. I read my Bible. I tithed. I helped others. I followed my church's rules. I was very religious.

Maybe my church's leadership could not tell I had a worldly mindset. Maybe they were fooled as much by my religious behavior as I was. Maybe my leaders lacked a spiritual mindset.

Maybe my leaders followed a church or denomination more than they followed the Lord Jesus Christ. Maybe my leaders were worldly-minded baby Christians just like me. Why else would they approve of me holding an influential leadership position within their ten-thousand-member church?

The service ministry I started and led was something I could do and did do through my natural abilities.<sup>15</sup> I saw the need so I started the ministry because I could do it.<sup>16</sup> At the end of one year, fifty men served weekly in the ministry.

It seemed like a great ministry. It appeared I was a great leader, at least in the eyes of Christians with worldly mindsets, a group of people that probably included the leaders of that megachurch.

Just as the men's service ministry was going great, about a year into it, Jesus said to me, "You have done this by your power. Now I am going to teach you to do things by My power."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Titus 1:16

<sup>16</sup> Romans 10:3

<sup>17</sup> Zechariah 4:6

## **By My Power**

I did not know what Jesus meant when He said, “You have done this by your power. Now I am going to teach you to do things by My power.”

But I knew in my heart that I had to resign from my leadership position. The day I knew I needed to resign, I did. I quit.

Most people in that megachurch wanted authority and when they got authority, they kept it. I had authority and God told me to give it up. I gave it up. Nobody in my worldly-minded church understood me. I did not understand myself. Why would any good Christian man quit being a good church leader?

Maybe Jesus said what He said about ‘my power’ and ‘His power’ because I did not know the difference between the two. Maybe I thought my power was God’s strength.

I had no idea what would happen next. But I knew I loved Jesus and I knew I must obey Him, so I off-boarded from the ministry I created through my power and watched it sail over the horizon without me.

## **What Happened Next?**

What happened next was this.

My natural abilities were suddenly useless in Jesus’ king-

dom. Whatever I did by my own power for Jesus, failed. It took a while for me to understand the sea-change.

I made mistakes. Many mistakes. I kept thinking that doing good things for Jesus was the same as being a disciple of Jesus. Although Jesus had warned me that my way of accomplishing things was changing, I did not understand what was different or why. I was clueless.

Immediately after resigning my leadership position, I joined a missions ministry. That effort failed. I was told not to come back.

Every Christian work I decided to do, failed. But everything Jesus told me to do, worked smoothly. It took me a long time to realize what worked and what didn't. Being persistent sometimes makes me a slow learner. The Bible calls this character trait being "stiff necked."<sup>18</sup>

Despite my string of failures, I started having some successes. Successes came when I did what I heard Jesus tell me to do. What I heard Jesus tell me to do wasn't as glamorous as leading a large ministry at a mega church. What Jesus told me to do required humility.

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<sup>18</sup> Acts 7:51

## From Garbage Man to Evangelist

Jesus often whispered to me to stop and clean up trash from roadside ditches. I did. I cleaned much garbage from many ditches. Some waste I picked up was gross. Work gloves and garbage bags found a place in my vehicle because I never knew when I would hear that Voice telling me to tidy the ditch, or what grossness I would find in it. (Until you have hand-cleaned roadside ditches, you cannot imagine the filth Americans will carelessly toss from their vehicles.)

There was no earthly praise for what I did. Nobody knew I cleaned ditches. Nobody but Jesus.<sup>19</sup>

Cleaning ditches was not my only ministry. Sometimes Jesus told me to freshen-up public restrooms. When He did, I became a spur-of-the-moment volunteer janitor. I got strange looks while scrubbing sinks, mirrors, toilets, and bathroom floors because while performing those tasks I usually wore a business suit and smiled a lot.

Sometimes Jesus told me not to go hunting. I liked hunting. I had hunted since childhood. At that point in life I ran a 2200-acre hunting club. Hunting in itself is not bad but when the God you love tells you to stop doing something you enjoy, you obey.<sup>20</sup> I quit hunting. My buddies could not understand.

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<sup>19</sup> Psalm 24:1, 1 Corinthians 10:26

<sup>20</sup> 1 John 5:3, Matthew 22:37

Sometimes Jesus told me to tell some random person about Him or give money to someone I did not know or give my Bible away to a stranger walking down the street. Once Jesus told me to tell a Muslim client about Him.

Jesus said, "Tell him about Me."

In that moment I realized I had a choice. I could tell the Muslim about his sin and his need for salvation and maybe lose my job, or I could keep quiet and compromise my love for Jesus. It was my choice.

I told the Muslim. I told him everything. Amazingly, the man repented of his sins and converted to Christianity on the spot. I was joyfully shocked.

Jesus has never told me to do anything bad but He has told me to do things that appeared odd to onlookers.

Some tasks He has asked of me were out of my comfort zone. By being brave, I learned the odd and unusual things Jesus asks of me have a way of working out. By being obedient, I discovered that God gives me the power to obey.

People I never met before were receptive to hearing about Jesus. Hundreds of people I walked up to on the street and in stores immediately repented of their sins, entrusted their lives

to the Lord Jesus Christ and became converts. Strangers were miraculously healed.

Despite my success at evangelism, I made none of those hundreds of converts into disciples. I did not know how to make disciples. At that point in my life, I was a zealot learning to hear and follow Jesus. I was learning to be a disciple. Learning to be a disciple can be hard when no one helps you. My life was tough going.

Jesus told me to love people who hated me, to forgive those who misused me, and to thoughtfully bless those who falsely accused me. Sometimes I failed.<sup>21</sup> Learning to do things by Jesus' power is harder than I am telling. Life was difficult.<sup>22</sup> I suffered.<sup>23</sup> Each year was harder than the last.<sup>24</sup> Few Christians encouraged me and most misunderstood me.

## Like Job

My friends were amazed at my evangelism and baffled at my suffering. My friends loved Jesus too but none of us knew what it meant to be a real disciple of Jesus, to have a spiritual mindset, to "walk by the Spirit."<sup>25</sup> Nobody explained to us that there is a price to pay for following Jesus. I felt alone.

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<sup>21</sup> *Proverbs 24:16*

<sup>22</sup> *Romans 5:3*

<sup>23</sup> *John 16:33*

<sup>24</sup> *James 1:2*

<sup>25</sup> *Galatians 5:16*

More than one friend told me that my life reminded him of Job's life. I was unencouraged. Job had troubles.<sup>26</sup> Job's prosperous business suddenly went bankrupt, all of his children died in a day, his wife scorned him, he became painfully sick, and his best friends accused him of turning against God. Like Job, I had troubles. Too many troubles to count.

Trying to explain what was happening to me was impossible. How could I make clear to friends that Jesus was teaching me to do things by His power? None of my convert-friends believed me when I did explain because they lacked the ability to understand.<sup>27</sup> They lacked a reference point by which to measure my life.

My life became unexplainable except to spiritual people, except to disciples of Jesus.

## Friends of Jesus

Disciples are spiritual people. Disciples have some understanding of what it really means to pick up their cross and follow Jesus no matter where He leads.<sup>28</sup> Jesus calls His disciples His friends.<sup>29</sup>

You may not have heard this before so I will let you in on a secret. Converts are not friends of Jesus, only His disciples are.<sup>30</sup> That's what Jesus means when He says,

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<sup>26</sup> *The Book of Job*

<sup>27</sup> *John 3:10-12*

<sup>28</sup> *Matthew 16:24*

<sup>29</sup> *John 15:14*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*



“You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”<sup>31</sup>

Jesus wants converts to become His friends, but Christians who are deaf to Jesus’ Voice or lack the courage to obey His commands cannot be His friends. Now you have heard it. Now you have learned a great secret.

What will you do with this knowledge?

## A Spiritual Friend

During that unexplainable season of my life, I knew one spiritual person, one real disciple. I had one understanding friend who was also a friend of Jesus. I am thankful that Jesus sent His friend to comfort me while my world fell completely apart and I didn’t know why.

With tears streaming down his cheeks, Jesus’ friend said to me, “John, Satan asked permission to sift you like he sifted Peter, and Jesus has consented.”<sup>32</sup>

When a Christian asks Jesus to release God’s judgments into his life so he can become holy and useful, a man’s very nice life can quickly turn into an unexplainable train wreck.<sup>33</sup>

The name of Jesus’ friend who is a friend to me is David Davenport, and David has been ever-good to me.<sup>34</sup> I hope you

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<sup>31</sup> John 15:14 NKJV

<sup>32</sup> Luke 22:31-32

<sup>33</sup> 1 Peter 4:17, Hebrews 12:26-29

<sup>34</sup> John 15:14, <https://teshuvahzion.com>; viewed July 30, 2021

find a friend like David, a friend who loves at all times.<sup>35</sup> A friend who loves you no matter how unexplainably messy your life becomes.

Not only do I hope you find a friend like that, but I also hope you will be a friend like that, a friend who loves no matter what. That is how Jesus loves. Disciples love like Jesus loves or at least they desire to. Sometimes wanting to love like Jesus loves is enough.

## **By Jesus' Power**

Disciples know that doing things by Jesus' power is completely different than doing things by their own power.<sup>36</sup>

When we do things by Jesus' power we work in unity with the Holy Spirit and by extension, we live in unity with other disciples. When we do things by Jesus' power we think with a spiritual mindset. We have a spiritual attitude. We live like Jesus.

I am writing this book because Jesus told me to write it. I am writing it by His power.<sup>37</sup> I hope it blesses you. I hope you make many converts into disciples. I hope you become one of those amazing Christians who goes all the way with Jesus, following Him wherever He leads, turning the world upside down as you go.<sup>38</sup> You will do it if you keep a spiritual mindset.

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<sup>35</sup> Proverbs 17:17

<sup>36</sup> Zechariah 4:6, Acts 1:8

<sup>37</sup> Acts 1:8

<sup>38</sup> Acts 17:6

## Mindset

Disciples have spiritual mindsets.<sup>39</sup>

Disciples' attitude is spiritual because at the right time they think about the right things.<sup>40</sup> They see the world through spiritual eyes. They hear with spiritual ears. They listen for Jesus' voice and they know what His voice sounds like.<sup>41</sup>

Disciples obey Jesus because disciples love Jesus with all of their heart, with all of their mind, with all of their soul and with all of their strength.<sup>42</sup> Because disciples love Jesus, they obey Him.<sup>43</sup>

Converts are not like disciples. Converts are unspiritual Christians. They live their do-it-yourself version of the Christian life with a carnal mindset.

'Carnal' means of-the-flesh or worldly. Because converts have a carnal or worldly mindset, their lives are unspiritual even when they do religious things like preaching, praying, going to Bible school or shipping off for the mission field.<sup>44</sup>

Converts cannot live in unity with the Holy Spirit. They live in unity with the world even if they follow their church rules, pay their tithe, read their Bibles, preach, and pray for people.

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<sup>39</sup> *Romans 8:6*

<sup>40</sup> *1 Corinthians 2:16*

<sup>41</sup> *John 10:27*

<sup>42</sup> *Matthew 22:37-38*

<sup>43</sup> *1 John 5:3*

<sup>44</sup> *Romans 8:6-7*

This is because converts see with worldly eyes and hear with worldly ears. They speak with worldly words and understand with worldly hearts even when acting religious. Converts are not disciples of Jesus but they can become disciples. You can help them.

Like me leading the men's service ministry, converts use their natural abilities to do religious things. No matter how good those religious things seem, their actions are ungodly. Their lives are unspiritual even when their words sound godly, their hearts feel cheerful and their actions appear righteous.

This fake form of godliness eventually overtakes every convert because converts do not live by Jesus' power. Instead, they live by their own power. Converts are unspiritual because they do not live by the Spirit. They do not live by God's power. Like me leading the men's service ministry, converts are ungodly Christians.

## **The Church of Converts**

Jesus once told me that half of His worldwide church was made up of converts. In other words, fifty percent of the people in His kingdom on earth were spiritual babies. That percentage will change. You will help change it.

With God's help you will make converts into disciples. You

will help spiritual babies grow up so they can hear and obey the living Jesus.

The church will grow up because it will soon be led by Christians who are spiritually minded, by men like you.<sup>45</sup> The church will be led by people who hear Jesus speak and possess the courage to follow Him wherever He leads. People like you.

### **Prayer:**

*Jesus, please help me live only by Your power, and help me make disciples who live the same way.<sup>46</sup> Amen.*

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<sup>45</sup> Ephesians 4:15

<sup>46</sup> 1 John 5:3



# THE GREAT HARVEST

**In the 1990's a respected church leader prophesied that a great harvest of souls would occur when God's people finally reach**

“a moment of total desperation, when we come to the point where we know that there is absolutely no other hope and no other source of help but God alone—then He will intervene.”<sup>47</sup>

Fifty years before those words were spoken, another great man of God prophesied that when unity arises between those churches that focus on the Bible and those churches that focus on the Holy Spirit, then

“It will mark the beginning of a revival that will eclipse anything that has been witnessed ... [it] will begin a missionary movement to the ends of the earth.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *The Coming Revival*, pg. 179, by Derek Prince; Whitaker House (2019).

<sup>48</sup> Smith Wigglesworth, at the 1947 Elim Conference; [revivalcentral.com/hudson-taylor-smith-wigglesworth-vision.html](http://revivalcentral.com/hudson-taylor-smith-wigglesworth-vision.html); viewed Feb 21, 2022.

In 1885 a famous missionary to China reported that he had seen a prophetic vision of the great harvest. The missionary wrote,

“In Russia I saw there will come a general all-encompassing national spiritual awakening spread to many European countries. Then I saw an all-out awakening, followed by the coming of Christ.”<sup>49</sup>

However this great awakening starts, many people will soon abandon the kingdom of darkness and come streaming into the kingdom of light. Some contemporary church leaders believe this coming wave of new converts is the great harvest spoken of in the Bible.<sup>50</sup> Jesus said the great harvest comes at the end of the age.<sup>51</sup>

Beloved, it's time to get ready. Like a tidal wave, the converts are coming.<sup>52</sup>

## Jesus Saves Repentant Sinners

To exit the kingdom of darkness and enter the kingdom of light each new convert will be thankful that Jesus died for his sins. Each will ask Jesus to live in his heart and be his King.

Some Christians use the word ‘Lord’ instead of ‘King.’ ‘King Jesus’ and ‘Lord Jesus’ mean the same thing.

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<sup>49</sup> Hudson Taylor, 1885, *preaching in Britain while home on leave from China*. [revivalcentral.com/hudson-taylor-smith-wigglesworth-vision.html](http://revivalcentral.com/hudson-taylor-smith-wigglesworth-vision.html); viewed Feb 21, 2022.

<sup>50</sup> Revelation 14:15-16; *The Coming Revival*; Derek Prince, (2019) Whitaker House; Bob Jones, *1 Billion Souls prophecy* (cf. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtWKDOa2Y7w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtWKDOa2Y7w) & [didyoulearntolove.org](http://didyoulearntolove.org))

<sup>51</sup> Matthew 13:39

<sup>52</sup> See Addendum, ‘How This Book Got Its Name’



No matter how wicked a person has been, King Jesus always answers yes to anyone who asks Him if they may come into His kingdom and live in His light and life.<sup>53</sup> Jesus saves repentant sinners.<sup>54</sup>

As each new person comes into Jesus' light and life, he is rescued from the death-grip of darkness and—as one Bible scholar described it, a destiny “so terrible that the human mind cannot even comprehend it.”<sup>55</sup>

The king of darkness is Satan. Satan is also the king of death. Satan's purpose is to kill, steal and destroy.<sup>56</sup>

Jesus' purpose is to give eternal life.<sup>57</sup> Jesus gives eternal life to all who ask Him.<sup>58</sup> It does not matter how wicked a person has been. Jesus saves all who call upon His name.<sup>59</sup> Jesus is empowered to save any person from eternal death.<sup>60</sup>

Eternal death means to be sent forever to the lake of fire.<sup>61</sup> Eternal death means being separated from life.<sup>62</sup> It means being tormented forever in hell without hope of escape.<sup>63</sup>

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53 Acts 2:21

54 Acts 2:38

55 *The Coming Revival*, pg. 179, by Derek Prince; Whitaker House (2019).

56 John 10:10

57 John 10:10

58 Luke 23:43, Romans 10:9-13

59 Romans 10:13

60 Matthew 28:18

61 Revelation 20:15

62 Matthew 25:46

63 Revelation 20:14

Any person who receives eternal life from Jesus can be called 'saved.'<sup>64</sup> Those who are saved will live forever in heaven with Jesus.<sup>65</sup> Jesus' name means 'salvation.'<sup>66</sup>

"I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life."<sup>67</sup>

## Converts or Disciples?

A recently saved person is called a 'convert.'<sup>68</sup> The word 'convert' means 'to change.' A convert is a changed person.<sup>69</sup>

Becoming a convert is the first step to becoming a disciple.<sup>70</sup> A man can be a convert without being a disciple but none can be a disciple without first being a convert.

The biggest difference between a convert and a disciple is mindset.<sup>71</sup> A convert has a worldly mindset. A disciple has a spiritual mindset. This is not my idea. This is what the Bible says.<sup>72</sup>

Disciples hear the Holy Spirit because they have at least a seed of each of the six foundational principles of Christianity planted in their hearts and minds.

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64 *Matthew 16:16*

65 *John 14:2, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Hebrews 11:16, 1 John 5:12-13*

66 *The name 'Jesus' means 'Jehovah is salvation'*

67 *1 John 5:13 NLT*

68 *1 Timothy 3:6*

69 *2 Corinthians 5:17, Jeremiah 24:7*

70 *Acts 21:16*

71 *Converts or Disciples; Al Houghton; (2005) Word at Work Ministries*

72 *Romans 8:6-7, Ephesian 4:17, Jude 1:19*

Because disciples have spiritual hearts and minds, they are spiritual people.<sup>73</sup> They live on earth by the same power Jesus did two thousand years ago. Converts however, are unspiritual Christians.

Converts' hearts and minds are worldly no matter how good or religious they act. Despite being saved, converts are worldly-minded. Converts have a tough time hearing the Holy Spirit speak to them. They are spiritually dull of hearing because they do not have some or all of the six foundational principles of Christianity planted in their hearts and minds.

Like the Pharisees of old, a convert can be quite religious. A convert can be a Bible scholar, a preacher or even a bishop. A convert might follow Biblical principles and carefully keep his community rules—but he cannot follow Jesus.<sup>74</sup> A convert's ways are ungodly because he cannot follow God.

Think of it like this: Jesus is God, and God is Spirit.<sup>75</sup> To follow the Spirit (the Holy Spirit) means to follow Jesus.<sup>76</sup> Only disciples follow Jesus because only disciples hear and obey the Holy Spirit.<sup>77</sup>

The Holy Spirit is in a sense, the Voice of God.<sup>78</sup> Disciples hear and obey God's Voice in the same manner that Jesus did when

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<sup>73</sup> John 16:13

<sup>74</sup> John 4:23-24

<sup>75</sup> John 4:24, John 8:58, John 10:30, Titus 2:13, Colossians 2:9, 1 Corinthians 8:6

<sup>76</sup> Acts 5:3-4

<sup>77</sup> John 14:23

<sup>78</sup> John 14:15-18

He walked the earth two thousand years ago.<sup>79</sup> Disciples live like Jesus lived—by the Spirit.<sup>80</sup>

## Spiritual Foundation

Converts may have four or five of the six elementary principles of Christianity in their hearts, but without all six, their spiritual foundation is unstable. Converts are like a six-post pole-barn missing one or more posts. Nothing about their barn is stable until all six posts are firmly and squarely in place.<sup>81</sup> Anchoring these posts in one's life means receiving these six teachings into one's heart.

Once a Christian's spiritual foundation is stable, he can begin to build himself into a solid spiritual house.<sup>82</sup> The process of hearing and following Jesus makes a man spiritually stronger in Jesus.<sup>83</sup> Disciples build themselves up in the Lord Jesus as they follow Him.<sup>84</sup>

Converts cannot build themselves up in the Lord Jesus even if they act religiously, follow their community rules and learn the Scriptures.<sup>85</sup> Converts may be missionaries or church leaders but they neither hear Jesus speak nor follow Him.

Sometimes God's leaders and the church's leaders are not

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<sup>79</sup> *John 5:30, John 12:49-50*

<sup>80</sup> *Galatians 5:16-18*

<sup>81</sup> *James 1:6-8*

<sup>82</sup> *Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 6:46-48*

<sup>83</sup> *Ephesians 6:10*

<sup>84</sup> *Jude 1:20*

<sup>85</sup> *Luke 6:49*

the same people. This will soon change. The church will soon have spiritual leaders who are real-deal disciples. If you're not one already, you will be. I know it! It's not by chance you're reading this book.

When Christians become disciples, they quit following religious leaders who do not hear and obey Jesus because they sense that such leaders cannot lead them into the will of Jesus.<sup>86</sup> Disciples will not follow religious leaders who speak of Jesus as 'Lord' but do not submit their lives to His will.

Disciples of Jesus fellowship with people who fellowship with Jesus, and Jesus only walks with those who walk with Him.<sup>87</sup>

## **A New Priority**

Turning converts into disciples will soon be the church's number one priority. Like a dam breaking, converts will suddenly flood into our midst. When the rush arrives, we must remember that no matter how good or godly the new converts seem, they come to us with worldly mindsets. They are not disciples.

Church membership does not make anyone a disciple. Water baptism alone does not make a man a disciple. Neither does being moral or ethical or good.<sup>88</sup> Only those who hear and

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<sup>86</sup> *John 7:17*

<sup>87</sup> *Amos 3:3*

<sup>88</sup> *Mark 10:18*

obey God are godly.<sup>89</sup> Only those who listen to and follow the living Jesus qualify to be His disciples.<sup>90</sup> Jesus only walks with those who walk with Him.<sup>91</sup>

Disciples are the only Christians who can act by God's power. They are the only people who please God.

## Spiritual Babies

When waves of converts begin landing on our doorstep, the responsibility of turning them into beginner disciples is not one we can put off. Like little babies, converts need spiritual help for every spiritual thing.<sup>92</sup> Just as children cannot assist their family until they reach the age of three or so, converts cannot contribute to God's household until they spiritually grow a bit.<sup>93</sup> We must help them grow.

## Spiritual Unity

If those who hear and obey God work together in unity then we can bring this harvest of souls safely into God's barn.<sup>94</sup>

Spiritual unity requires three things:

1. Hearing the Holy Spirit
2. Obeying the Holy Spirit
3. Dwelling in God's presence

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<sup>89</sup> Luke 18:19

<sup>90</sup> Luke 6:46

<sup>91</sup> Amos 3:3

<sup>92</sup> 1 Peter 2:2, John 18:36

<sup>93</sup> Romans 10:3, Ephesians 4:15

<sup>94</sup> Psalm 133:1; Acts 15:25

If we fuss and fail to work together in spiritual unity then good seeds from this harvest will be lost.<sup>95</sup> Jesus warned us not to lose good seeds.<sup>96</sup> You can read about good seeds that were lost in Matthew 13:1-23 and Luke 8:4-13.

In that story, the seeds that sprout for a season in rocky places and among thorns but wither without bearing fruit are pictures of converts that never become disciples. However, the seeds that grow in good soil and bear good fruit are converts who mature into disciples.

When the converts come flooding in, by working as a team of spiritual harvesters, we can transform millions of worldly-minded converts into true disciples of the living Jesus. We can do this if we do it together. We will do it together. You will help.

## **Prayer:**

*Lord Jesus, please help all who hear and obey Your Holy Spirit work together in godly unity so we can bring this harvest of new believers safely into Your barn. Help us make disciples of You and not a church or denomination. Show us our part in this harvest and help us do it. Amen.*

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<sup>95</sup> Matthew 12:25

<sup>96</sup> Matthew 13:1-23, Luke 8:4-13





# THE VOICE OF JESUS

## **My Sheep Hear My Voice**

**An influential preacher once told me that Jesus does not speak to His people anymore.** The preacher tried to make me believe that I could not hear Jesus say anything. I was shocked. That's not what the Bible says.<sup>97</sup>

I respected that man. I thought he was spiritually minded.

The preacher said what he said, I suppose, because he cannot hear the living Jesus speak to him. Because he lacks spiritual ears to hear, he thinks no one else can hear Jesus either.<sup>98</sup> Being spiritually deaf, he assumes everyone else is too.

Just as a person deaf from birth does not know what hearing sound is like, a convert who has never heard Jesus speak does not know what it's like for disciples to hear His voice. That's

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<sup>97</sup> *Isaiah 30:21*

<sup>98</sup> *Matthew 11:15*

the challenge the influential preacher faces, the man who told me I could not hear Jesus.

When the influential preacher told me I could not hear Jesus say anything, the only response I could imagine giving the man was something Jesus said in the Bible. So I said what I remembered.

I said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."<sup>99</sup>

That ended our conversation. The man stood gaping as I walked away.

Although I did not understand it in the moment, now I know that Jesus told me what to say and He helped me say it.<sup>100</sup> I never found out what the unspiritual preacher thought about my response but looking back, it is as clear as day that Jesus spoke to him through me. I wonder if he heard.

## **My Spiritual Father**

The only man who ever acted like a spiritual father to me could barely read. The elderly man of God was not overly educated. Despite not being able to read well, when he preached, he often said things that came straight out of the Bible. This godly man preached from the Bible he barely read because the words of God were written on his heart.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> *John 10:27 NASB*

<sup>100</sup> *Matthew 10:19, John 14:26*

<sup>101</sup> *Hebrews 10:16*

My spiritual father had a spiritual mindset. He was a friend of Jesus because he heard Jesus and he obeyed Jesus.<sup>102</sup> My spiritual father was Jesus' friend, so he preached what Jesus asked him to preach. My spiritual father listened to the Holy Spirit, and he obeyed his Lord God to the end.<sup>103</sup>

That godly man has gone to his great reward. I miss him. One day I will see him again. I will see Alvin Taylor in heaven and I will rejoice to stand once more in the presence of that marvelous man of God who counted me his son.

## Jesus Speaks

Jesus speaks to His disciples in ways they understand Him. If a disciple has a Bible and can read it then Jesus can speak to that man through the Bible.

When Jesus speaks through the Bible, a disciple hears in his heart what Jesus says to him through the words written on the page. I experience this. When I read the Bible, sometimes the words seem like they are speaking directly to me.

When I read Bible passages that do not seem to be speaking to me, I have learned that Jesus is not saying those words to me at that time. Ofttimes I keep reading until I do hear Jesus speak. Sometimes I read the Bible for an hour or longer

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<sup>102</sup> John 15:14

<sup>103</sup> Revelation 3:10

before my heart hears His Voice. Like you, when I hear the Voice, I listen.<sup>104</sup>

## **My Word**

Jesus said to those who believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.”<sup>105</sup> In this Bible verse, the phrase, “My word” means the words Jesus speaks.

Some Christians think the phrase from this verse, “My word,” means only the words in the Bible. If “My word” only meant the words in the Bible then to be a disciple a Christian would first need a Bible and then second, he would need to be able to read it.

What if a Christian does not have a Bible or cannot read? Would these challenges prevent a man from living his life as a disciple of Jesus? No, I cannot believe it. Jesus must mean something other than ‘the Bible’ by the phrase ‘My word’ when He says, “If you continue in My word then you are truly disciples of Mine.”<sup>106</sup>

## **Neither Poverty Nor Illiteracy**

In Central America I met disciples of Jesus who could not read well. In Africa I met disciples who did not own a Bible.

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<sup>104</sup> John 14:24

<sup>105</sup> John 8:31 NASB, underline added

<sup>106</sup> *ibid*

But these men who could neither read nor owned a Bible had spiritual mindsets. Because they had spiritual mindsets they were disciples of the living Jesus.

These men could hear their Teacher speak and they obeyed Him. Because they obeyed, they were friends of Jesus—the King of the universe.<sup>107</sup>

The “word” these friends of Jesus “continue in” is the word Jesus speaks into their hearts.<sup>108</sup> Their ability to hear Jesus and their commitment to obey Him qualifies these financially poor, illiterate men to be Jesus’ disciples.

Truly, neither poverty nor illiteracy can prevent a man from being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## In Different Ways

Because every individual is unique, Jesus speaks in diverse ways to different disciples.<sup>109</sup> A disciple listens with his heart because he never knows when or how Jesus will speak to him.<sup>110</sup> Jesus can speak to anyone anyway He wants to.<sup>111</sup> Jesus is God.<sup>112</sup> Jesus is the King of the universe.<sup>113</sup> He is Creator of all.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> *John 15:14*

<sup>108</sup> *Jeremiah 31:33*

<sup>109</sup> *Psalms 139:14*

<sup>110</sup> *Matthew 11:15, Mark 4:9, Luke 8:8, Luke 14:35*

<sup>111</sup> *John 5:24-25*

<sup>112</sup> *Philippians 2:5-6; John 17:21; John 1:18; Colossians 2:9-10*

<sup>113</sup> *1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 1:5; Revelation 19:16; Deuteronomy 10:17*

<sup>114</sup> *John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, 1 Corinthians 8:6*

A non-Christian co-worker once told me I was not acting like a Christian. In her voice, I heard the Voice of Jesus. I was grieved. Jesus used an unbeliever to discipline me. I told the woman I was sorry for my bad behavior. I told her she was right. My heart was broken because I brought shame to Jesus.

Jesus can speak through anyone or anything. The Bible says He even speaks through nature.<sup>115</sup>

## God Speaks Through Nature

Years ago I found myself gazing up into the night sky. I eyed the Big Dipper, a part of the Great Bear constellation of stars that continually points to Polaris, the North Star.<sup>116</sup>

When I counted the seven stars that comprise the Big Dipper, I remembered how in the Bible seven stars represents the worldwide church.<sup>117</sup>

Continuing to look upwards, I thought how a dipper is a tool used by men to drink water and recalled that the Holy Spirit is “living water” for “anyone who is thirsty.”<sup>118</sup> Then I realized that the North Star is like Jesus—our Guiding Light.<sup>119</sup>

Standing outdoors in the night air, I was amazed at how a

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<sup>115</sup> Psalm 19:1-3

<sup>116</sup> Ursa Major

<sup>117</sup> Revelation 1:7

<sup>118</sup> John 7:37-39 NLT

<sup>119</sup> James 1:17, Malachi 3:6

handful of stars talks about Jesus, the church and the Holy Spirit, and how those stars have spoken of these timeless truths throughout history.

Because the North Star and the Big Dipper are only seen by people north of the Equator, my thoughts then took me to the Southern Hemisphere. I wondered if the King of the universe had done something similar for people living South of the Equator. Immediately I remembered that South of the Equator navigators use the Southern Cross constellation to locate due South. They do this in the same way that sailors North of the Equator use Polaris, the North Star for a guiding light.

The Southern Cross is made from five stars. In the night sky those few stars outline Jesus' cross. Some people think the number five represents God's grace. Wow! I thought. Constant in the Southern night is the symbol of God's timeless grace to all who accept it.<sup>120</sup>

Since the study of the stars is a field of science called astronomy, I think I should add that in my 20-year career in science, I never met a top scientist who was an atheist. Highly intelligent, intellectually honest scientists who seek the truth eventually discover clear evidence of God in their work. The Creator's fingerprints cover His magnificent creation. Those with eyes to see find God hiding in plain sight.

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<sup>120</sup> Revelation 13:8

“For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.”<sup>121</sup>

## I Can Do All Things

In whatever manner Jesus chooses to speak to His disciples, He never tells them to do something they cannot do. Our God is just.<sup>122</sup> Being just, He never gives unjust commands. This may partly explain why the Bible says, “For I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength.”<sup>123</sup>

Some Christians think the above Bible verse (Philippians 4:13) means they can do whatever they put their mind to. But Philippians 4:13 does not mean anything like that.

“I can do everything through Christ” means a disciple has Jesus’ power to do whatever King Jesus tells him to do. That is what Philippians 4:13 means. And that is a lot. It is enough to turn the world upside down.<sup>124</sup>

You will help turn the world upside down because you will do everything Jesus asks you to do.<sup>125</sup> You are His faithful disciple. You are a friend of Jesus, the King of the universe.

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<sup>121</sup> Romans 1:20 NLT

<sup>122</sup> 2 Thessalonians 1:5-6

<sup>123</sup> Philippians 4:13 NLT

<sup>124</sup> Acts 17:6

<sup>125</sup> Luke 24:49; John 10:27-29



“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”<sup>126</sup>

**Prayer:**

*Jesus, help me to hear Your Voice in whatever ways You speak to me. Help me to obey Your commands. Help me be a faithful disciple. I want to be Your friend. Amen.*

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<sup>126</sup> John 15:8 NASB



# BEGINNER DISCIPLES

**Every Christian was first born of his natural mother and later he was born again of God.**<sup>127</sup> In other words, every Christian was born twice—once naturally and once spiritually. Because every Christian has a natural birthday and a spiritual birthday, every Christian has a natural age and a spiritual age.<sup>128</sup> If we did not have a spiritual age then God would not command us to spiritually “grow up.”<sup>129</sup>

In spiritual age, I was about three years-old when Jesus said to me, “I am going to teach you to do things by My power.”

When I heard Jesus say those words, I was a 30-year-old church leader who had been loving God whole heartedly for four years. At that time I did not understand that almost everything I had done for Jesus had been accomplished

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<sup>127</sup> John 3:3 and 3:7

<sup>128</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:46 NIV

<sup>129</sup> Ephesians 4:15 ESV

through my natural power. And don't forget—I was a church leader who at the same time was a worldly-minded baby Christian who needed to grow up! I was a spiritual mess and had nary a clue about it.

## Three Years Old

Because Christians have spiritual ages we can think of a beginner disciple as a young child. Like a little boy or girl who finally has his first set of teeth and can eat the food his parents eat. A child about the age of three.

A beginner disciple is a Christian who is spiritually three years old. A beginner disciple is like a three-year-old child who can do the little tasks his father tells him to do and eat small portions of the same food his parents eat.

A beginner disciple may be 30 years-old in his body but in spiritual years every beginner disciple is three.

A spiritual three-year-old can obey the little things Jesus asks him to do. Obeying the little things that the Spirit whispers into one's heart is the point where every Christian starts to become a friend of Jesus.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> John 15:14

## Pathway of Maturity

The pathway of maturity is obedience. Obedience is the key to spiritual growth. There is no other way to grow up.<sup>131</sup> The way to become godly is to obey God.

“No man is good,” Jesus says, unless he is godly.<sup>132</sup>

When we say a man is godly, we mean he is blessed.<sup>133</sup> In Biblical terms, to be blessed means to be godly. Being godly (or being blessed) is acting in union with God.

## Spiritual Meat

Some Christians think that eating spiritual meat means listening to a good sermon or studying the Bible. They are mistaken. According to Jesus, eating spiritual meat means obeying the Holy Spirit.<sup>134</sup>

For disciples, obedience is like eating spiritual meat.<sup>135</sup> Eating spiritual meat helps disciples grow spiritually stronger. Without spiritual meat, disciples grow spiritually weak. Disciples obey the Holy Spirit because they know they need spiritual strength to walk this earth in a manner that pleases God.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Ephesians 4:15

<sup>132</sup> Mark 10:18 NIV, Luke 18:19 NIV

<sup>133</sup> Psalm 1, Psalm 32, Psalm 34, Psalm 84, Psalm 94

<sup>134</sup> John 4:34

<sup>135</sup> John 4:34

<sup>136</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:9, Hebrews 11:5-6

When Jesus walked the earth, He said His spiritual meat was to obey His Father in heaven.<sup>137</sup> Like Jesus, disciples eat spiritual meat by obeying God.<sup>138</sup>

“Jesus saith unto them, ‘My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.’ ”<sup>139</sup>

By continually obeying the Holy Spirit, a disciple builds himself up in Christ Jesus so that he becomes a spiritual strong man.<sup>140</sup> As his spiritual muscles grow stronger, he becomes increasingly like Jesus. In other words, he grows up.<sup>141</sup> He spiritually matures.

The pathway of maturity is obedience. Obedience occurs one step at a time.

## Strong and Healthy

An obedient disciple is a strong and healthy member of Jesus’ body. Jesus’ body is the whole church, and while that body is not entirely healthy yet, it soon will be. The church will be strong and healthy when every convert becomes a faithful disciple.<sup>142</sup>

When all of Jesus’ body obeys the Holy Spirit then the church will be the most powerful force on earth. The church will be

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137 *John* 4:32-34

138 *1 Corinthians* 3:2

139 *John* 4:34 KJV

140 *Ephesians* 6:10; *John* 6:63

141 *Ephesians* 4:15

142 *Colossians* 1:18, 24

beautiful and it will be unstoppable. What a glorious day that will be!

Because you are a disciple of Jesus, you always obey the commands spoken into your heart. Jesus feeds you all of the spiritual meat you need so that you can be a strong and healthy part of His body. That way you can spiritually grow up to live on this earth like Jesus.

Those who live like Jesus are 'Christ-ians.' In other words, they're little Christs. You are a little Christ.

### **Prayer:**

*Jesus, please help me to hear and obey You no matter what. Help me turn converts into disciples by teaching them to hear and obey You. Amen.*





# CONVERTS

**Jesus once told me to join a church I did not wish to visit. I obeyed. I went. I joined. It was awful.**

The Sunday school class I attended had about twenty middle-aged adults in it. Most in the class had been Christians from the cradle. Most had been saved for forty or more years. A few weeks after I joined the church, this happened.

The Sunday school leader asked the class what book we wanted to study next. The man did not mean a book in the Bible. He meant a book from the bookstore or the library. After everyone who wanted to comment did so, I raised my hand. Not having said one word in class before then, all forty eyes in the room stared at me. Twenty people wondered what I would say.

The leader smiled pleasantly and asked me to speak. I quietly said, "Have you ever considered studying a book in the Bible

instead of a book about the Bible?" The way he responded you would have thought I had cursed his dear mother.

The leader jumped up, strode over to my chair and jabbed his finger in my face. His face was red. He was shaking. He yelled, "We are not going to study the Bible! It is too dangerous to study the Bible! We are going to study books about the Bible so we can stay safe!"

That is what he said and that is how he said it. How can I forget?

I was shocked. I did not fully realize how worldly-minded converts truly are.

The people in that big financially wealthy church I had obediently joined were probably saved from the lake of fire and likely had a future place in heaven but they remained worldly-minded. They were converts. They were spiritual babies with worldly mindsets.

Spiritually speaking, they had been sitting on the same pew for thirty years, pooping in their pants and blaming the guy next to them for smelling badly. They needed to grow up.

Few of the long-time Christians in that eight-hundred-member church had matured into disciples of Jesus. Few had grown to be spiritually three years old. In a spiritual sense, those people wore diapers and thought it normal.

The people in that church did not know they were long-time spiritual babies. They did not know that they were not disciples. Their leaders repeatedly told them that they were mature believers. I heard them say so.

But the people in that church were not mature believers and neither were their leaders. They were infants in Christ. Few there could eat spiritual meat. Few could hear or obey the Holy Spirit. They lacked a spiritual mindset. They needed to grow up.

Because those Christians lacked a spiritual mindset, they were spiritually defeated. They were worldly minded. They were afraid to read the Bible. It was worse than I'm telling. Their state was tragic.<sup>143</sup>

## **The Holy Spirit Will Teach You All Things**

Maybe in a strange way the Sunday school teacher had a point when he jabbed his finger into my face and yelled about not studying the Bible. Maybe it truly was dangerous for him to read the Bible. After all, Christians with worldly mindsets have a hard time hearing the Spirit speak to them even through the Bible.<sup>144</sup>

If they read the Bible, their worldly minds only cause them to misunderstand it. And if they are fervent, their zeal only compounds the error.

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<sup>143</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:7-11

<sup>144</sup> Mark 7:6

Zealous Christians with worldly mindsets leap into the black abyss of legalism, never understanding what Jesus meant when He said, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”<sup>145</sup>

When Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach us “all things,” He meant ‘all things.’

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher even when He uses Sunday school teachers or preachers or even nature to teach us.<sup>146</sup>

When disciples read the Bible then the Holy Spirit can teach them through the Bible. But if a man cannot hear the Holy Spirit speak, how can the Spirit teach him from the Bible?

Since Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach us ‘all things,’ and since that Sunday school teacher at the wealthy church could not hear the Holy Spirit speak, how could that man benefit from studying the Bible?<sup>147</sup> The Bible is a spiritual book written for spiritual people. Its pages were never intended for worldly-minded people be they Christian or not.

## The Good News

The good news is that when the time finally came for Jesus to tell me to leave that big wealthy church, that same Sunday

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<sup>145</sup> John 14:26 NASB

<sup>146</sup> Romans 1:20

<sup>147</sup> John 14:26

school teacher had become eager to hear the Holy Spirit. That man was excited to study the Bible and hear what the Holy Spirit would say to him through it.

That Sunday school teacher has become my friend. He is Jesus' friend too. He's Jesus' friend because he's become a disciple. He's a disciple because he hears and obeys Jesus. Maybe Jesus sent me to that big church full of spiritual babies in hopes a few of them might grow up enough to become His disciples.

Maybe the day will come when King Jesus sends you where you do not want to go.<sup>148</sup> Maybe your King will send you into some uninviting city or unfamiliar church where people dress differently than you or speak in a different way than you, so that you can turn converts into disciples.

You can do anything your King asks of you because Jesus empowers you to accomplish all He commands. Remember, you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.<sup>149</sup> That is God's good promise to you.

## **Shave Your Beard**

Once the Holy Spirit told me to shave my beard. This was odd because a few years earlier He told me to grow a beard. I was the first man in my family in over 100 years to have a beard and some family members expressed unkind thoughts about it.

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<sup>148</sup> John 21:18

<sup>149</sup> Philippians 4:13

Friends, too. I paid a price for my beard and now I needed to shave it?

When I asked Jesus why I needed to shave, the Holy Spirit replied, “Because I am sending you to a city where the Christians will not accept you if you have a beard.”

I shaved my beard and then found myself moving to a place where no man had a beard. When I got there, it soon became evident that if I had a beard, none would have welcomed me.

The special mission and purpose God has for you might be difficult or unpleasant for a time. You may have to shave your beard or wear a different style of clothing. You may have to join a church not to your liking or move to an unfamiliar city or take a new job—all in obedience to Jesus. But the results of your obedience will be worth it.

Even if you are not around to see the good results your obedience brings, be faithful to the end. I promise, it will be worth it.<sup>150</sup>

“For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Matthew 5:12, Luke 6:23, Revelation 22:12

<sup>151</sup> Hebrews 3:14 NLT

## Worldly Minded

The Bible says converts are worldly-minded.<sup>152</sup> Being worldly-minded means thinking like an ungodly person. It means having an ungodly attitude. It means making life-choices the way the world does. Being worldly-minded does not mean being a 'bad' person.

A worldly-minded person can be a moralist or a theist. A worldly-minded person can give their life's work and wealth to help the poor.<sup>153</sup> A worldly-minded man can carefully follow church rules and preach great Sunday sermons. I know some who do. But a worldly-minded person—even if he's the bishop or the Pope, never thinks like Jesus thinks.

Not thinking like Jesus means being ungodly. Converts who keep hoping in Jesus are going to heaven but truth be told, they live like ungodly people. They live by their intellect instead of the Holy Spirit. They live by their own strength instead of God's Power. Nothing they do pleases God because they are ungodly.

Over the years I have seen ungodly converts sneak into places of church leadership. I know this because the Holy Spirit has shown these men to me. I was an ungodly church leader myself.

Some of these ungodly converts are Sunday school teachers and some are preachers.<sup>154</sup> Some are bishops. Some fill up

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<sup>152</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:1-4

<sup>153</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:3

<sup>154</sup> Jude 1:4-5

whole churches. Some have been Christians from the cradle and some do not trust men with beards. Jesus had a beard.<sup>155</sup>

Beloved, do not be surprised when God sends you to some uncomfortable place to turn converts into disciples. Rest assured that God is sending the right man for the job. Be strong and courageous.<sup>156</sup> You can do it.<sup>157</sup> Even if it means shaving your beard.

## **Spiritual Babies**

As spiritual babies, converts cannot understand what is being said to them by the Holy Spirit. If converts did understand, they would lack the strength to obey. Converts are spiritual babies.

Spiritual babies can only drink spiritual milk. Converts, even if they've been Christians for thirty years, cannot swallow any other spiritual food except spiritual milk. In the next chapter we will learn what spiritual milk is.

You can feed spiritual milk to spiritual babies so they can grow up and become beginner disciples. This book will help you. But more importantly, the Holy Spirit will help you. The Holy Spirit will help you feed spiritual babies the spiritual milk they need to grow up. You can do it. God will help you.

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<sup>155</sup> *Isaiah 50:6*

<sup>156</sup> *Joshua 1:9*

<sup>157</sup> *Philippians 4:13*



**Prayer:**

*Jesus, help me recognize converts as spiritual babies, babies that need my help to grow up. Help me love them as You love them no matter how messy they are. Help me value spiritual babies for the great men and women of God they will surely become. Amen.*



# SPIRITUAL MILK

**A natural baby not fed properly can get a medical condition called Failure to Thrive.** A baby afflicted with Failure to Thrive is unhealthy and sickly.

A similar sickness affects spiritual babies who are not fed the spiritual milk they need to grow up. Converts are spiritual babies. The longer converts go without spiritual milk, the more spiritually unhealthy they become.

The Bible equates the six foundational Christian principles to spiritual milk.<sup>158</sup> The six ingredients that make up spiritual milk are:

1. Repentance from Dead Works
2. Faith in God
3. Instruction about Baptisms
4. The Laying On of Hands
5. The Resurrection of the Dead and
6. Eternal Judgment

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158 Hebrews 5:12-13, 1 Peter 2:2, 1 Corinthians 3:2

## Whole Milk

All six ingredients are required for spiritual milk to be 'whole.' In other words, for spiritual milk to mature a convert into a beginner disciple, all six ingredients are equally important. No part can be left out. Substitutes will not do.

*"Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness."<sup>159</sup>*

No matter how good another Christian principle may sound or how needful it may seem, if it's not on this list then it is not spiritual milk. For example, daily devotions, Bible reading, inner healing and deliverance are spiritual principles that greatly help with spiritual growth but none are an ingredient of spiritual milk.

Like a natural baby deprived of natural milk, spiritual babies suffer without spiritual milk. Converts are spiritual babies. They must have spiritual milk to grow. If they cannot grow, they cannot do God's work. We should stop trying to feed spiritual babies foods they cannot eat. Such efforts are worthless anyway. Just take a look around the church and you'll see what I mean.

Having spiritually sick babies in our midst must stop. Having sick babies is a crime of neglect and God has empowered

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<sup>159</sup> 1 Peter 2:2-3 NLT

us to stop it. God has given us the power to feed spiritual babies a healthy diet so they can grow up. It's time we got to work.

Before we can get to work, we must first admit that our past disciple-making paths are unfruitful. The church's powerlessness is proof that we have been way off course. Today's church hasn't many Christians who live by the power of Christ.

## **The Peter Pan Problem**

There are two groups of spiritual babies we need to feed. The first group is already inside the church. They are Christians who like the fictional character Peter Pan, have never grown up.<sup>160</sup>

The second group of babies is coming in the great harvest. The second group will far outnumber the first. We need the first group (those already in the church) to grow up, so they can help us feed the second group (those who are coming).<sup>161</sup>

Some of the spiritually sick babies now in the church have been saved for decades but because they're so immature, they cannot discern the difference between good and evil.<sup>162</sup>

Because spiritual babies do not walk by the Spirit, they cannot sense the difference between godly and ungodly. They do not know that 'good' is a synonym for 'godly' and

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<sup>160</sup> *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie (1911)

<sup>161</sup> *Ephesians* 4:15

<sup>162</sup> *Hebrews* 5:14

‘evil’ is everything else. They haven’t a clue because they’ve never grown up.

Christianity’s ‘Peter Pan Problem’ isn’t a new one.<sup>163</sup> It’s a two-thousand-year-old problem.

## **The 2000-Year-Old Problem**

The New Testament books of First and Second Corinthians are written to a church brimming with Peter Pan Christians.

The Corinthian Christians had been converts for years but they were not spiritually thriving. Spiritually speaking, they were unhealthy babies, sick and listless. They had a case of Failure to Thrive.

What is written to the Corinthians by the Apostle Paul is sad and direct. Paul writes:

“... I couldn’t talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in the Christian life. I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren’t ready for anything stronger.

“And you still aren’t ready, for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn’t that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren’t you living like people of the world?”<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> 1 Peter 2:2

<sup>164</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 NLT

The Bible says the Corinthian Christians experienced jealousy and strife.<sup>165</sup> The Corinthians, the Bible says, allowed angry tempers, slanders, gossip, arrogance and disturbances.<sup>166</sup> They quarreled.<sup>167</sup> They were divided.<sup>168</sup> They were deceived.<sup>169</sup> They were sinning.<sup>170</sup> The Bible says the Corinthians were Christians who lacked true knowledge of God.<sup>171</sup>

The Corinthian Christians were so spiritually sick that they did not know good spiritual authority from bad.<sup>172</sup> Read a bit more of what Paul wrote to these Peter Pan Christians.

“You happily put up with whatever anyone tells you, even if they preach a different Jesus than the one we preach, or a different kind of Spirit than the one you received, or a different kind of gospel than the one you believed.”<sup>173</sup>

The Corinthian Christians happily listened to false teachings. They kept teachers in their church who like bad shepherds, led them astray. The Corinthian Christians were afflicted with the spiritual version of Failure to Thrive.

These believers should have grown up.<sup>174</sup> They could have grown up, but they refused to grow up. By refusing to grow

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165 1 Corinthians 3:3  
 166 2 Corinthians 12:20  
 167 1 Corinthians 1:11  
 168 1 Corinthians 1:12-13  
 169 1 Corinthians 15:33  
 170 1 Corinthians 15:34  
 171 1 Corinthians 15:34  
 172 2 Corinthians 11:5  
 173 2 Corinthians 11:4 NLT  
 174 Ephesians 4:15

up, they became spiritually sick. In the Bible, the Corinthians were not alone in their sickly immaturity.

The author of the book of Hebrews tells his audience of believers that while “by this time” they should be spiritual teachers they still do not know the difference between right and wrong.<sup>175</sup> Ouch!

The author of Hebrews writes,

“... you are spiritually dull and don’t seem to listen. You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God’s word.”

“You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn’t know how to do what is right. Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.”<sup>176</sup>

Beloved, today our churches are filled with Peter Pan Christians, believers as immature as the Corinthians and those addressed in the book of Hebrews. Our churches are packed with spiritually sick babies who need help maturing to the spiritual age of three. We must help them grow up. They need milk.

It is not by accident you are reading this book. God is calling you to help spiritual babies grow up. While you might neglect

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<sup>175</sup> Hebrews 5:12 ESV  
<sup>176</sup> Hebrews 5:11b-14 NLT



your duty, you cannot escape your call. We are all responsible for feeding the babies. God commands us to turn converts into disciples.<sup>177</sup>

You can turn converts into beginner disciples. The Holy Spirit will help you. With God's help, you can do it. You can feed the babies.

### **Prayer:**

*Jesus, please lead me to Your spiritual babies and help me feed them the spiritual milk they need to grow. Give me the courage to obey Your command to "go and make disciples."<sup>178</sup> Amen.*

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<sup>177</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>178</sup> Matthew 28:19 NIV



# WHO MAKES CONVERTS? WHO MAKES DISCIPLES?

**Daily for three years I asked God to help me lead people to Jesus.** Then one February day in Chicago, God said yes to my prayer. His 'yes' started with a cab driver.

While the cabbie drove towards my hotel, I had an uncommon urge to tell him the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ and then to ask him if he wanted to become a Christian.

Standing in a downtown Chicago street, the cabbie became a convert. For years thereafter I led strangers to Christ almost every week of my life. I did this by hearing and obeying the Holy Spirit. Some people called me an evangelist.

Evangelists do their work by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>179</sup>  
If God does not anoint you to be an evangelist, don't worry

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<sup>179</sup> Acts 1:8

about it. Evangelism is not your job. Just do what Jesus asks you to do. That is enough. Doing what Jesus wants you to do is enough to turn the world upside down.<sup>180</sup>

## God Makes Converts

The Bible says God draws men to Himself.<sup>181</sup> In other words, God makes converts.<sup>182</sup>

When God draws men to Himself, He often uses Christians to extend His salvation offer. Christians empowered by the Holy Spirit to give out God's salvation offer are called 'evangelists.'<sup>183</sup> Men who accept God's salvation offer become converts.

When I see Christians passing out tracts or knocking on doors to tell the unsaved about Jesus, I can often discern which ones were sent by God and which ones were sent by the church or by their own will. If God is not sending you, do not go. To not be sent by God and go is sin. It's a dead work.

Repentance from dead works is the first ingredient of spiritual milk. We will talk about dead works later.

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<sup>180</sup> Acts 17:6  
<sup>181</sup> John 12:32  
<sup>182</sup> 1 Peter 3:21  
<sup>183</sup> Ephesians 4:11

## You Are a Harvest Worker

Every disciple of Jesus is not an evangelist but every disciple is a harvest worker. Christians who help converts become disciples can be called harvest workers.<sup>184</sup> You are a harvest worker. As God's harvest worker you are qualified to help bring God's harvest into His barn.

Farmers know there are many jobs to do in a harvest. Likewise there are many jobs to do in this coming spiritual harvest. Every disciple will not do the same work during the harvest but every disciple will do something. As you pray about your part in the harvest, the Holy Spirit will show you what to do. Doing what He says is enough. It's enough to turn the world upside down for Jesus.

## We Make Disciples

It is our God-given responsibility to turn each new convert into a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>185</sup> We know it is our responsibility because Jesus, speaking to His disciples, said, "Go therefore and make disciples."<sup>186</sup>

"Go therefore and make disciples," is not a suggestion. It is a command from the King of the universe.

Some Christians call this command The Great Commission. I

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<sup>184</sup> *Matthew 9:35*

<sup>185</sup> *Matthew 28:19*

<sup>186</sup> *Matthew 28:19 NASB*

call it bringing the harvest into God's barn. God will make the crop but the church is responsible to get the harvest into the barn. In a sense, God's barn is the worldwide church.

In the Bible the word 'church' always describes a group of God's people. Before we talk about the word 'church,' let's talk for a minute about hearing the Holy Spirit.

### **Prayer:**

*Jesus, I am willing to do whatever You want me to do to help bring the harvest into Your barn. "Here I am, send me."<sup>187</sup>  
Amen.*

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<sup>187</sup> Isaiah 6:8

# THE HOLY SPIRIT

**The National Weather Service repeatedly warned that a massive category five hurricane was tracking towards our Florida home.** The storm was Hurricane Irma. The year was 2017.

The National Weather Service forecast Hurricane Irma's eye center to cross directly over our small home in Tampa. Having the eye center cross over our home meant we were about to get hit by two sides of the hurricane's super-destructive eye wall.

Sustained winds in Hurricane Irma's eye wall measured 185 MPH. Our home was about to be destroyed by the equivalent of two or more F3 tornados.<sup>188</sup> An F3 tornado rips roofs and walls off of well-constructed homes, overturns trains and uproots most trees.

Again and again government authorities advised me to pack up my family and leave the coast for safety. We lived in a flood zone. Tampa Bay was only three blocks away. The approaching danger was great and I knew it.

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188 F3 tornado winds measure 158 to 206 mph. [www.weather.gov/ffc/fujita](http://www.weather.gov/ffc/fujita); viewed April 4, 2022.

## Hurricane Hugo

28 years before Hurricane Irma came storming across the Gulf of Mexico, a slightly less destructive category four hurricane named Hugo made landfall near my home which was then in Charleston, South Carolina. The year was 1989.

As Hurricane Hugo approached, I heeded the government's warning and traveled sixty miles inland to my parent's farm. Later that night the storm hit Charleston, traveled inland and struck the family farm in Manning, South Carolina with heavy rainfall and sustained winds of 120 MPH. The eye wall passed ten miles west of the farm.

During the storm that night, a tremendous crash sounded in the house. From my bedroom door I shined a flashlight into the den. Wet green leaves lay scattered on the carpeted floor. Windows had blown out and it seemed certain the roof would go next. The house walls were shaking.

My father, mother and I crouched between a bed and a wall, praying that the house would not explode. Any moment it seemed the roof would lift completely off and the walls would tear apart.

The house survived but in the morning calm, the property looked like a war zone. Hurricane Hugo destroyed every building on the farm except one grain bin filled with corn and the house we huddled in. Some of our neighbors suffered worse.



My father said the landscape reminded him of the European battle fields he survived during World War II. To me it looked like hundreds of tornadoes had crisscrossed the farm in the night. All timber on the farm was lost. It was three weeks before electricity was restored to the farmhouse.

Other houses were cut apart by fallen trees. In places, bare concrete foundations were all that remained of once sturdy homes. The damage was catastrophic.

From its landfall in Charleston, South Carolina through Charlotte, North Carolina, Hurricane Hugo churned a wide path of destruction. \$4.2 billion in insured damage resulted and worse, sixty-seven people died.<sup>189</sup>

## **Stay Put**

Having survived Hurricane Hugo and lived for years in its aftermath, I knew the government's warnings to leave the Florida coast were serious. Hurricane Irma was no joke. Irma was far more powerful than Hugo. Plus now I had a wife and two small children to care for. But every time I prayed about leaving for safety, I sensed the Holy Spirit telling me to stay in harm's way.

I prayed over and over. Every time I prayed I heard in my heart, "Stay put." That was all; "Stay put."

<sup>189</sup> en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane\_Hugo; viewed February 13, 2022; <https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/southeast/2009/09/22/103951.htm>; viewed March 15, 2022

What the Holy Spirit was telling me to do made no sense. The danger was real. Did God want us to die? What about the children? To stay put seemed at best, foolish. At worst it appeared maniacal and potentially, evil. If I was hearing wrong, I might cause my family's death.

As Hurricane Irma drew closer and the government warnings grew louder, family members began calling my wife, urging her to take the children far away from the Florida coast and if I would not go along, they said, "leave him in Tampa." They told my wife we were going to kill the children.

Our family members were unwittingly trying to put fear into our hearts. Although many of them were Christians, not one encouraged us to obey God. In fact, not one asked if we had heard from God.

My wife and I know it is better to obey God than man.<sup>190</sup> If we suffered in the coming storm then it would be in obedience to Jesus. We—like you—love the Lord Jesus more than our own lives. Whatever Jesus asks us to do, we do as best we can. Our obedience is our love for Him.<sup>191</sup> In fact, obedience is the only way we can love Him.<sup>192</sup>

As Hurricane Irma drew menacingly nearer, the family calls grew shrill and the government warnings, loud. With all the

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<sup>190</sup> Acts 4:19  
<sup>191</sup> 1 John 5:3  
<sup>192</sup> John 14:15

worldly 'noise' swirling around me, I became concerned that I was not hearing the Holy Spirit correctly.

What if I was wrong? What if God was trying to speak to me through common sense and atmospheric scientists? What if the world was sane and I was the religious crackpot many think me to be? In twenty-four hours I could be standing before God, responsible for the death of my family.

I called two older men who love me and love the Lord Jesus Christ. I asked each man what he thought. Was I hearing God correctly? Both men prayed with me. Then both assured me I was hearing right. Having families of their own and knowing what I faced, they encouraged me to obey God.

Truly, the Holy Spirit was telling me to remain in place come what may. God was commanding me, "Stay put."

My precious wife and I prepared as best we could for the approaching disaster. God had not said we would not suffer. He only said, "Stay put." It would take a miracle for us to emerge unharmed from the coming storm and I knew it. I knew it all too well.

## **It Shall Not Come Near You**

Long before Hurricane Irma came charging across the Atlantic Ocean and into the Gulf of Mexico, I learned that obedience is always best even if obedience results in suffering. Jesus obeyed and as a result He suffered death on a cross. Should those of us who follow Jesus in hopes of becoming like Him expect a different outcome?

When Jesus said, "Pick up your cross and follow Me," He was not inviting us to a Sunday ice cream social. He was not asking us to kick back in ease on earth. He was commanding us to die with Him.

Some hours before Hurricane Irma was forecast to hit our little home with a double-dose of tornado-like winds and a massive tidal surge, I started to pray one more time. Despite the calming assurances of the two older men of God, doubt had crept back into my mind.

Time was short. There would be no more opportunity to evacuate my wife and two small daughters from the storm's onslaught. Even though the roads were clogged with people evacuating from the storm's projected path, this was our last best chance to run for higher ground, so I prayed.

As soon as I began to pray that last prayer, I heard inside my heart the Holy Spirit. He spoke Psalm 91:7. He said, "A thou-

sand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come near you.”<sup>193</sup>

Hallelujah!

I ran and told my wife. Not only were we to stay put through the storm but God promised we would be safe. Despite the US National Weather Service forecast, despite the atmospheric scientists, the weather radars and satellite photos, Hurricane Irma was not coming near us. Hallelujah!

Within a few hours of hearing the Holy Spirit speak Psalm 91:7, the great storm turned from its projected path over our home and weakened. The winds died away and the rain became gentle. My children ran about in the yard enjoying little Hurricane Irma. My wife laughed and noted that the weather Maker and the weatherman are not one and the same fellow.

All of our well-meaning family, government and media folks who encouraged us to evacuate were wrong but the Holy Spirit was right. He is always right—even when it means suffering.

## **The Holy Spirit**

Jesus never said that common sense or our conscience, or church leaders, family or friends, or government would guide us into all truth. And while we honor the Bible, Jesus never

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<sup>193</sup> KJV

said He would send us a book to direct us into all truth.

Rather, Jesus promised to send us the Spirit of truth, and that Spirit, He said, would lead us into all truth.<sup>194</sup>

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”<sup>195</sup>

Based on Jesus’ words above, if we are not following the Spirit then we are building our lives on untruths. Disciples know this and are careful to follow the Spirit.

Converts however, are spiritually dull and can be led astray by false guides. They can be tricked into building their lives on unstable ground. We must help converts grow up so they can follow the Spirit, so they can be guided by God into all truth.

## **You Can Hear the Holy Spirit**

Following is one of the key promises Jesus makes to His disciples about the Holy Spirit.

“Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, ‘This is the way you should go,’ whether to the right or to the left.”<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> John 15:26, John 16:13

<sup>195</sup> John 16:13 ESV

<sup>196</sup> Isaiah 30:21 NLT

You can trust Holy Spirit to tell you the best thing to do even if it takes great courage to do it. Even when the result of your obedience does not turn out the way you hoped.<sup>197</sup> Even when your obedience requires suffering.<sup>198</sup>

A disciple of Jesus can venture as far into obedience as Jesus went.<sup>199</sup> You can go all the way with Jesus for it is written, “It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher.”<sup>200</sup> With these words, Jesus says His disciples can be like Him. You can be like Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is the Voice that Jesus uses to speak to His disciples. Jesus says, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”<sup>201</sup> Jesus’ disciples can follow Him into His glory.

The Holy Spirit is the One who teaches disciples about Jesus.

“But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me,” promises Jesus.<sup>202</sup>

The Holy Spirit can be compared to a teacher working with students. Disciples are His students. The Bible says, “You will see your teacher with your own eyes. Your own ears will hear him.”<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Job 13:15

<sup>198</sup> 1 Peter 1:6

<sup>199</sup> John 14:12

<sup>200</sup> Matthew 10:25 NASB

<sup>201</sup> John 10:27 ESV

<sup>202</sup> John 15:26 ESV

<sup>203</sup> Isaiah 30:20b-21 NLT

Sometimes the Holy Spirit's Voice can sound like your own thought or appear like a picture in your mind. Sometimes you can hear the Voice in the words of other people. The prophet Elijah said it sounded like "a still small voice."<sup>204</sup>

The Voice is peaceful. The Voice can speak with a gentle feeling or a great urge. The Voice never causes fear although it might take courage to obey. If it takes courage to obey then be courageous.<sup>205</sup> The Lord is with you.<sup>206</sup> You will prevail. God will help you.

When I am unsure if I am hearing the Holy Spirit correctly, I ask Jesus to make His words clear to me. Jesus always helps me hear the Holy Spirit. Jesus understands how frail I am and He is always kind to me.

## Listen

When you listen with your whole heart, you will hear the Holy Spirit, and when you hear Him, Jesus will help you obey.<sup>207</sup> The Holy Spirit is with every true disciple. Every disciple hears Him, and every disciple obeys.<sup>208</sup> You can always obey, even when it takes courage.

Be courageous.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> 1 Kings 19:12 KJV

<sup>205</sup> Joshua 1:9

<sup>206</sup> Judges 6:12

<sup>207</sup> Jeremiah 29:13

<sup>208</sup> John 10:27

<sup>209</sup> Joshua 1:9



## Prayer:

*Jesus, please help me hear and obey the Holy Spirit no matter what any man tells me.<sup>210</sup> Help me to be strong and courageous regardless the cost.<sup>211</sup> Help me to know You are always with me no matter what.<sup>212</sup> Thank you for being my faithful Helper.<sup>213</sup> Amen.*

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<sup>210</sup> Acts 5:29

<sup>211</sup> Joshua 1:9

<sup>212</sup> Matthew 28:20

<sup>213</sup> John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7



# THE WORD 'CHURCH'

**If you can show me in the Bible where a man must be a member in good standing with a local church to be a part of Jesus' kingdom, I will pay you \$100.00. Let me know what you find.**<sup>214</sup>

While everyone saved by King Jesus automatically belongs to 'the church' and are subjects in His kingdom, I have crossed paths with powerful men of God who did not regularly associate with a local group of Christians. Their lack of local church membership did not negate their position as princes of the Realm. They lived in obedience to Jesus.

So what does the word 'church' mean if all Christians belong to 'the church' but some Christians might not belong to 'a church?' Converts might need this question answered, and that answer should be Biblical.

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<sup>214</sup> Hebrews 10:25 does not require a believer to be a member of one local church; rather it says, "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (ESV).

## What Does 'Church' Mean?

In the Bible the word 'church' always describes a group of God's people.

Sometimes the word 'church' describes all the people in the world who belong to Jesus' kingdom.<sup>215</sup> The word 'church' can mean everyone on earth who is saved.

Sometimes the Bible uses the word 'church' to refer to the Christians in a region, like the Christians in a county or a state.<sup>216</sup> Sometimes 'church' means the Christians in a town or city.<sup>217</sup>

Other times in the Bible the word 'church' defines a local group of God's people who meet in a special building or in a home.<sup>218</sup> This last way is how many people understand the word 'church.' But this oft-thought way is not always the best way.

With these different meanings of the word 'church,' we should keep in mind that in the Bible, 'church' never means a physical building. Rather, 'church' always defines a group of God's people.

## The Savior Is Not The Church

Converts should also know that no church or denomination can save anyone from the fires of hell.<sup>219</sup> Being water baptized

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<sup>215</sup> Matthew 16:18, Acts 5:11

<sup>216</sup> Acts 9:31

<sup>217</sup> Acts 8:1, Acts 11:22, Acts 11:26, Acts 18:22, 1 Corinthians 1:2

<sup>218</sup> Acts 14:27, Romans 16:5

<sup>219</sup> Matthew 5:22; Mark 9:43

and being on the membership roll of a local church is not the same as being saved.

The Bible says that only Jesus has the power to save sinners. And Jesus only saves repentant sinners.

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”<sup>220</sup>

Jesus is our Savior, not the Church.

## **Christianity Is Not The Church**

Satan often tricks unbelievers (and sometimes converts) into equating Christianity with the church. I have heard more than one unbeliever reject Jesus because of the condition of the church. I have also counseled Christians who questioned Jesus because of the way the church mistreated them.

Those who measure Christianity by the stature of the church will come up short in their calculation. They will keep coming up short until the day the church matures into “a bride adorned for her husband.”<sup>221</sup> That will be the same day “we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Acts 4:12 ESV

<sup>221</sup> Revelation 21:2 ESV

<sup>222</sup> Ephesians 4:13 ESV

Until that glorious day comes, the Bible says there can be church leaders who are “twice dead, ... like wandering stars, doomed forever to the blackest darkness.”<sup>223</sup> Rather than equating Christianity with the church, Christianity must be measured by the Christ for which it is named, and Christ Jesus is perfect. Christianity is as perfect as the Christ.

Even when the church is as perfect as “a bride adorned for her husband,” it will remain powerless to save anyone from anything.<sup>224</sup>

Only the Lord Jesus Christ saves sinners. And Jesus only saves sinners who repent. Jesus saves all who call upon His name.<sup>225</sup>

## **Prayer:**

*Jesus, help me understand the differences between your church and You. If I have trusted in anything other than You to save me, I repent. Amen.*

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<sup>223</sup> *Jude 1:12-13 NLT*

<sup>224</sup> *Revelation 21:2 ESV*

<sup>225</sup> *Romans 10:13*

# GET READY CHURCH!

## One Billion Souls

**In the coming harvest of souls, some respected Christian leaders believe that one billion people will become new converts.** One billion is 1,000,000,000. Only one-third that many people live in all of the United States of America.

Each of these new converts must be turned into a disciple of Jesus by the church. While it is Jesus' job to make converts, it is our responsibility to make disciples.<sup>226</sup>

Jesus commanded His church to, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations."<sup>227</sup> We are the church, and our job is making disciples.

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<sup>226</sup> *Matthew 28:19*

<sup>227</sup> *Matthew 28:19a NASB*

## All The Nations

When Jesus says we are to “make disciples of all the nations,” “all the nations” can mean one of three things. It can mean all the countries in the world or all non-Jews or all the unsaved people on earth. Whatever it means, “all the nations” means a lot of people. Millions and millions of people.

Millions of people are about to come flooding into Jesus’ kingdom. The church must prepare for this harvest. The local church, the regional church, the whole church. We must get ready.

For us to make one billion converts into disciples, every local church must work in unity, and no one group of believers can do it alone. The coming harvest is too big. This harvest is so big that every local church must work together with its neighboring church.

At a basic level this means getting to know the Christians in the church down the street as well as those in the church up the street. It means networking.<sup>228</sup> It means quit arguing about the nonessentials of the faith and embrace our brothers with Christ’s love.

## Members of God’s Church

Any man who has the Holy Spirit is our brother. Having the Holy Spirit is the one sure mark of every true member of God’s family. If anyone is in God’s family, he is a member of the church.

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<sup>228</sup> Mark 1:19



Only disciples can tell if another man has the Holy Spirit. Converts struggle knowing.

If we don't fix our 'fishing nets' now and build relationships with our brother "fishers of men" both up the street and down the street, some of the 'fish' will get away later.<sup>229</sup>

"Come, follow me," calls Jesus, "and I will show you how to fish for people!"<sup>230</sup>

Those who hear that call and follow Jesus are disciples. Only disciples are fishers of men.

## **Disciples are Team Players**

We are going to need team-oriented disciples to bring this great catch of souls safely in.<sup>231</sup> Bench-sitting converts will be of no help, and not working with our brothers in neighboring churches will shorten our nets. If we fail to catch all the fish then the Lord of the harvest will be sad.<sup>232</sup>

You are called to help bring in the catch. You can do it. The Holy Spirit will help you bring unity to the church. He will help you mend the 'fishing nets' of church unity so together we can make every convert into a disciple of Jesus.

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<sup>229</sup> *Matthew 4:19 KJV*

<sup>230</sup> *Matthew 4:19 NLT*

<sup>231</sup> *John 21:6*

<sup>232</sup> *Matthew 9:38; Luke 10:2*

**Prayer:**

*Jesus, please help me network now with other Christians so that when the harvest comes later we will be ready. Help me build strong relationships with Your disciples in other churches so that together we can bring the whole harvest safely into Your barn. Amen.*

# PART TWO

THE SIX FOUNDATIONAL  
PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY



# INTRODUCTION

**Part Two of this book gives a basic teaching on each of the six foundational principles of Christianity.** These principles are the elementary Christian teachings that converts need to become beginner disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On one hand it is the job of disciples to teach the six primary principles to converts. On the other hand it is the responsibility of converts to ask Jesus to place these six teachings into their hearts. As the old saying goes, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink.

Once the six teachings are part of the new believer's heart, he or she is a beginner disciple. Every beginner disciple can start following Jesus with small steps because he can hear and obey the Holy Spirit in little things.

With these six basic teachings, a new believer can start to have a spiritual mindset. Mindset is the difference between a convert and a disciple. A convert needs a spiritual mindset. A disciple has one.

The six foundational principles of Christianity are:

1. Repentance from Dead Works
2. Faith in God
3. Instruction about Baptisms
4. The Laying On of Hands
5. The Resurrection of the Dead
6. Eternal Judgment

These six principles are listed in Hebrews 6:1-2.

I tend to think the principles appear in the order of their importance. Whether that is the case or not, I suggest teaching them in the arrangement the Bible presents them. God has good reasons for putting His lists together in the order He does.

*“Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.”<sup>233</sup>*

## Experience Required

While this book gives an introductory teaching on the six principles, some of the principles must also be experienced to have effect. For example, “repentance from dead works” requires repenting from doing good deeds in disobedience to the Holy Spirit and “instruction about baptisms” necessitates immersions.

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<sup>233</sup> Hebrews 6:1-2 NASB

If you spend time in prayer, the Lord Jesus will show you how to lead converts through the experiences you can facilitate. The ones you cannot help with, Jesus will perform Himself. With Jesus, you can do this. You can make new converts into beginner disciples.

## **Basic Teaching**

Please note that this little book offers only a basic teaching on the six foundational principles of Christianity. Each one of these principles could be studied for a lifetime without sounding bottom.

In fact you might hear a veteran disciple say something like this about his life in Christ Jesus: “The more I understand, the more I realize how little I know.”

Let’s get started. What’s ahead is easy.

## **Prayer:**

*Jesus, please place each one of these six foundational teachings into my heart forever. Help me see my life and the world around me with a spiritual mindset. Help me be a faithful disciple, the kind who follows wherever You lead. Amen.*





# REPENTANCE FROM --- DEAD WORKS ---

**After church one Sunday as I headed for my car, I saw a woman I had never seen before.** As I looked at her, my spiritual eyes saw that she did not have Jesus. She was lost.

Up to that point in this story, I was acting godly. I began acting ungodly when I decided to tell the lost woman the Good News about Jesus.

The more I told the woman about Jesus and her need for Salvation, the angrier she grew. The longer I spoke, the tighter her eyes narrowed. She seethed. She got so angry I began wondering if she was going to jump on my head like a wild-cat and scratch my eyes out. So I shut my mouth and walked away before I found out.

Walking away, I realized telling her about Jesus had pushed her further from Jesus than she had been before I opened my big mouth. I could not understand how this could happen.

Wasn't I supposed to tell everyone about Jesus? Wasn't telling people about Jesus always good? Didn't Jesus say go and preach the gospel to all creation? As I walked towards my car, I asked Jesus what happened.

He replied, "I DID NOT TELL YOU TO TELL HER ABOUT ME."

His tone of voice scared me.

I quickly said, "Jesus, I am sorry I ever said anything to the woman."

And I meant it. I was scared of Jesus.

The King of the universe was displeased with me because I had done a very bad thing. I had driven an unbeliever further away from her only hope of Salvation. I did what seemed good to me, and in so doing I sinned. I acted wickedly.

Nobody had taught me that I could do something good and my action be bad. Nobody taught me that doing a good deed in disobedience is a dead work. At that time in my life, I was a convert learning to be a disciple. I was a mess.

## The First Principle

According to Hebrews 6:1-2, the first foundational principle of Christianity is repentance from dead works. Because repentance from dead works appears first on God's list of basic teachings, it might be the most vital.<sup>234</sup>

Repentance from dead works is not the same as repentance from evil.<sup>235</sup> Every Christian knows he needs to repent from evil. Repenting from evil is part of getting saved. Dead works are different.

Dead works are good deeds done in disobedience to the Holy Spirit.

For a convert to become a disciple, you must teach them that they cannot run around doing whatever good they think will please Jesus. Converts must repent from following their mental sense of right and wrong and instead learn to follow the Spirit wherever He leads, going where He says go and refusing to go where He says don't go.

Disciples follow Jesus. To follow Jesus we obey the Holy Spirit in thought, word and deed no matter what anyone else thinks. Our mission is not to please people but to please the King of the universe.

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<sup>234</sup> Hebrews 5:12-13

<sup>235</sup> 1 Peter 3:11-12

## Human Effort

You might say dead works are religious deeds accomplished through human effort. “Human effort accomplishes nothing,” says Jesus.<sup>236</sup>

All men naturally think that dead works are good. This is why the need to repent from dead works is always new information and must be taught. Only deeds done in unity with the Holy Spirit are good. Anything else a man does is sin, no matter how godly those actions seem.<sup>237</sup>

Converts do not know this. You must teach them.

You must teach them to stop doing good things the Holy Spirit has not told them to do and begin doing only what the Holy Spirit leads them to do.

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death,” explains Proverbs in not one verse but two.<sup>238</sup>

Dead works are done by man’s will, not God’s. Dead works are dead, dead, dead! Dead works are dead because the Spirit of life is not in them. The spirit of death is in dead works no matter how good they seem.

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<sup>236</sup> John 6:63b NLT

<sup>237</sup> Matthew 7:23

<sup>238</sup> Proverbs 14:12 and Proverbs 16:25 (ESV).

The Spirit is life<sup>239</sup>. Deeds done by the Spirit are alive and life giving.<sup>240</sup> Only deeds done in obedience to the Holy Spirit are alive. Everything else a man might accomplish, no matter how marvelous, is dead.

## **Dead Works Fool Converts**

Doing good deeds that the Holy Spirit has not told us to do might fool some people into thinking we have a spiritual mindset. We might even fool ourselves. I did. I thought I was spiritually minded when I had a worldly mindset and zealously went about doing religious deeds. I had slipped into the chasm of legalism and became spiritually arrogant.

No matter how many people get fooled by dead works, dead works never fool the Holy Spirit. Dead works make Jesus sad.<sup>241</sup> They make Jesus sad because no matter how good or godly dead works appear to be, they do not give life. They are works of the flesh and are as dead as dust.<sup>242</sup> The flesh is dust.<sup>243</sup>

## **Mistaken**

Because converts have worldly mindsets, they naturally think any good or religious deed pleases God. Converts are gravely mistaken. Only works of obedience please God.<sup>244</sup> Only deeds

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<sup>239</sup> *Romans 8:10*

<sup>240</sup> *John 6:63*

<sup>241</sup> *Ephesians 4:30*

<sup>242</sup> *John 6:63*

<sup>243</sup> *Genesis 3:19*

<sup>244</sup> *1 John 5:2-3*

done by and through the Holy Spirit have life and give life. The Spirit is life.<sup>245</sup>

No matter how good, godly or religious dead works appear to be, they are evil. The Bible says, “Stay away from every kind of evil.”<sup>246</sup>

Disciples know they need to repent from dead works. They know they need to turn from doing good deeds in disobedience.

Converts know none of this and they will not know it until you teach them. You can teach them. You must. Otherwise converts will waste away their lives acting religious yet never living by the Holy Spirit. Living by the Holy Spirit is true life.

## **Hell is Full of Moralists**

Like the so-called ‘good men’ of this world, the best converts can do is follow their mental sense of right and wrong. In other words, the best a convert can be is a religious moralist.

Moralism is not the same as following Jesus. Moralism never pleases God. The fires of hell are fueled with moralists. Hell is populated with ‘good’ men.

Being moral might make a convert ethical. Among worldly-minded Christians, being ethical and moral might qualify a man to be a preacher or a bishop. But having a high standard

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<sup>245</sup> Romans 8:6-10

<sup>246</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:22 NLT

of ethics and morals is living by one's own willpower.

Living by willpower cannot please God no matter how 'good' such a life looks. There's a fatal error in the code. Following the conscience and living morally and ethically cannot substitute for following Jesus. Following the conscience is living by one's own power and that power is innately corrupt.

Satan knows this. One of Satan's best tricks is to lure converts into thinking 'being good' is the same as following Jesus. While Christians who try 'to live good lives' have a place in heaven, they forfeit great rewards. They forfeit great rewards because they never follow Jesus. They never live like Jesus' disciples. They live like people of the world.

Let me tell you a story about my conscience telling me I was doing good when in fact I was living like the world and committing great evil.

## **The Gideon Bible**

When I told you about leading the Chicago cab driver to Jesus, I left off the end of the story.

After the cab driver prayed for Jesus to forgive him for his sins and be his King, I felt a powerful urge to get the Gideon Bible out of my hotel room and give it to the born-again cabbie. It was an urge I could not shake.

The Gideons are Christian men who with their own money give away Bibles. The Gideons put Bibles in hotel rooms.

My conscience fought against the 'urge' to take the Gideon's Bible from my hotel room even though the cab driver needed it. My conscience said taking the Bible was stealing, and stealing, my conscience advised, was sin.

"Thou shalt not steal," my conscience reminded me.<sup>247</sup> So I left the Gideon's Bible in the hotel room and watched the newly converted cab driver motor away Bible-less.

Would you pray for him? Would you pray for me?

At the time I thought I was being good. I thought I was being moral and ethical. I thought I was pleasing God. By obeying my conscience instead of the 'urge,' I left the cab driver without a Bible, packed my bag and went to the airport. How could I do that?

Years later I told this story to an elderly man who had belonged to the Gideons for decades. When I finished relating the story, the elderly man kindly said, "John, the Gideons would have loved for you to give that Bible to the cab driver. That's the kind of thing we put Bibles in hotels for."

When the Gideon gentleman said this to me, I immediately knew the 'urge' I felt was the Holy Spirit telling me to give

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<sup>247</sup> Exodus 20:15 KJV



that hotel Bible to the cab driver. But I obeyed my conscience instead of the Holy Spirit. By being good, I sinned. By being moral, I did a dead work. By acting ethically, I made God sad and I sent a new believer away without the Bible he needed.

Not taking the Gideon Bible from the hotel was a good deed done in disobedience. Not taking the Bible was a religious act. Not taking the Bible was not good at all. So years after the event, I repented for doing a good deed in disobedience. I repented for following my conscience instead of obeying the Holy Spirit. Late repentance is better than no repentance. I often wonder how the cab driver is getting along. Would you pray for him?

Converts think any good or religious deed pleases God. Converts must learn that only deeds done in obedience to the Holy Spirit please God.<sup>248</sup> All other religious works no matter how good they seem are dead works.

## **The Value of Good Deeds**

Years ago a young convert friend and I were discussing the value of good deeds. I said it would be better to sit at home on a rocking chair and enjoy a glass of water than go do a good deed in disobedience. I explained to him that the Bible says, "Obedience is better than sacrifice," because good deeds done in dis-

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<sup>248</sup> *Romans 8:7-8*

obedience are blackest sin.<sup>249</sup> He had difficulty understanding. He was a worldly minded Christian. He was a convert.

Dead works come in many styles and forms. When a Christian does a dead work, Jesus' kingdom may reap some benefit but the Christian doing it will not be rewarded by God.<sup>250</sup> A Christian never profits from dead works. Even when a church full of Christians thinks a dead work is good, it remains black sin.

A disciple knows it is always better to do nothing than to do a bushel of religious deeds.

## **Obedience is Love for God**

As a disciple of Jesus I am only responsible to be obedient to the Holy Spirit. The Bible says my obedience to the Spirit is my love for God.<sup>251</sup> The result of my obedience belongs to the One I obey.

The apparent result of my obedience does not matter to me or to the church or to any preacher or bishop.<sup>252</sup> What is consequential is obedience.<sup>253</sup> As long as I obey, I can trust God's plans to work out the way He wants them to. By obeying, I follow Jesus wherever He leads. He is responsible for where we go and what we do. Living like this is easy.

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<sup>249</sup> 1 Samuel 15:22 NASB

<sup>250</sup> Matthew 25:26

<sup>251</sup> 1 John 5:3

<sup>252</sup> Romans 14:4

<sup>253</sup> Daniel 9:4

You can live this way too. You can follow Jesus, trusting His plans all the days of your life. He is trustworthy, and His plans for you are good even when life feels hard.<sup>254</sup> Disciples know this.

Since walking away from the wildcat woman, I have been spat on and cursed for telling people about Jesus. I have been attacked with knives and almost run over by more than one car for telling people about Jesus. My life has been threatened. Guns have been pushed into my face by men who knew how to pull the trigger.

But unlike my experience with the wildcat woman, I told each one of those angry people about Jesus in obedience to the Holy Spirit. I did what Jesus asked me to do.

The apparent result of my obedience is for King Jesus to deal with, not me. My responsibility as a disciple is to obey.<sup>255</sup> Jesus' responsibility is to bring me safely home to Him. And He is faithful. He will do it.

If I die being obedient, do not weep for me. I am with my Lord in glory.

## **Disciples Obey**

Our lives are not our own.<sup>256</sup> We were bought with a price.<sup>257</sup> As disciples our duty is to follow, to obey, and to keep going.

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<sup>254</sup> *Jeremiah 29:11*

<sup>255</sup> *John 14:15*

<sup>256</sup> *1 Corinthians 7:23*

<sup>257</sup> *1 Corinthians 6:20*

If along the way we fall, we get back up and press on. That is what disciples do.

You can always obey the Spirit. You can always follow Jesus, even if a hurricane is coming to destroy your house with you and your family inside. Even if you do not escape the crazy person trying to run you over with a car. Even if the man with the gun pulls the trigger. Even if you lose your job and family members disown you. No matter the circumstances, you can obey. God will strengthen you to obey. God will empower you to obey Him as you love Him with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your strength.<sup>258</sup>

Since we disciples do not belong to ourselves but to Jesus, the result of our obedience belongs to Jesus.<sup>259</sup> One way or another, good things happen when we obey even if we cannot see the good at the time. Even if Christians we love, ridicule us, we press on.

## **Ask for Help**

When I am unsure what the Holy Spirit wants me to do, there are a few older men I call for help. These men know me, they love me, and they love Jesus. When I call these men, they pray with me. They help me figure out what Jesus wants me to do. I pray you have mature believers like that in your life.

When someone in your church asks you to do some good deed or you think of something religious or godly to do,

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<sup>258</sup> *Matthew 22:37-39*  
<sup>259</sup> *Romans 14:4*

whisper a prayer and ask Jesus if He wants you to do it. Ask Jesus if this idea is His idea or man's idea.<sup>260</sup> You will often get a feeling about what you should do.<sup>261</sup> This is the Holy Spirit answering your prayer.<sup>262</sup> Obey Him.<sup>263</sup> You can always obey.

## Never Worry

If Jesus asks you to do something, do it as if you were doing it for your King because truly you are.<sup>264</sup> If Jesus does not want you to do some good or religious deed, do not worry what others say or think.<sup>265</sup> You are being obedient to the Holy Spirit. You are being spiritual. You are being a disciple.

Even if a church full of preachers, bishops and family members oppose you, be obedient to God as best as you can.<sup>266</sup> God will reward you for your obedience.<sup>267</sup> We will all be proud of you. Both in this world and in the world to come.<sup>268</sup>

When we get to heaven, I want to hear your amazing stories of following Jesus.

You are a fearless disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>269</sup> You will do anything the Lord Jesus asks because you love Him with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, and all your

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<sup>260</sup> Acts 5:29

<sup>261</sup> Isaiah 30:21

<sup>262</sup> Jeremiah 29:13

<sup>263</sup> 1 John 5:3

<sup>264</sup> Colossians 3:23

<sup>265</sup> Luke 11:28

<sup>266</sup> John 14:21

<sup>267</sup> Hebrews 11:6

<sup>268</sup> Matthew 25:34

<sup>269</sup> Joshua 1:9

strength.<sup>270</sup> You will prevail.<sup>271</sup> God will help you prevail.

We are proud of you! Press on.

## **Prayer:**

*Jesus, forgive me for the good deeds I have done in disobedience.*

*I only want to do what You want me to do. Please speak clearly to me so there is no question about what you want me to do.*

*When I am unsure what to do, give me godly friends who will help me know Your will.*

*Please keep me safe from a religious spirit. I only want the Holy Spirit. Help me trust Your plans for me and help me trust the plans You have for those I love. Amen.*

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<sup>270</sup> Matthew 22:37-38

<sup>271</sup> Revelation 12:11

# FAITH IN GOD

## **A Fable**

**There's a fable about two shepherds that helps explain the second ingredient of spiritual milk—faith in God.** The story goes like this.

Two Amish brothers, Steve and Jake Lapp, earned about a \$5,000.00 bounty on wolves. The Lapp brothers raised sheep and hated wolves so they didn't think twice about this golden opportunity. When the boys heard good money could be made killing wolves, they grabbed their guns and went hunting.

During their hunt, late one night, Jake woke up and looked out around the brothers' campfire. One-hundred sets of wolf eyes stared back at him and his sleeping brother. The wolves snarled and licked their hungry lips. They paced about like demons in the dark. Jake shook his brother on the shoulder.

Jake whispered, "Steve, wake up. We're rich!"  
—The end.

## Disciples' Faith

This chapter is about that kind of faith, the kind of faith that causes men faced with imminent danger to immediately consider their circumstances a blessing from God. We might call it 'disciples' faith.' Here's what I mean.

Converts have faith in Jesus to wash away their sins, to save them from hell and to take them to heaven.<sup>272</sup> Because a convert believes in Jesus, he is justified. Being justified means being saved.<sup>273</sup> Disciples on the other hand, believe Jesus, and by believing Jesus day-by-day come what may, they are empowered to become like Jesus.

This chapter is about that kind of faith—ongoing and growing faith. In a phrase, disciples' faith.

Disciples' faith is like wearing supernatural glasses that cause you to see every difficulty life throws your way as a golden opportunity to become more like Christ.

In the story of the two shepherds, Steve and Jake believe that the Lord Jesus sent them to kill wolves, not to be killed by wolves. Because they believe Jesus, the thought that the wolves might eat them never enters their minds. The thought of danger never enters their minds because they have disciples' faith.

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<sup>272</sup> Galatians 3:8

<sup>273</sup> Galatians 2:16



When Jesus says, “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you... have no fear,” disciples believe Him and obey Him no matter what comes their way.<sup>274</sup>

For disciples, difficulties, dangers and persecutions are a promise, not a possibility. Converts need to know this. You need to tell them.

Ongoing and growing faith— disciples’ faith, is part of a spiritual mindset. Without this kind of faith, a man will quit following Jesus when the going gets tough, and every true disciple experiences tough going.

## **Go Straight Through**

As disciples there’s no honorable way around the difficulties that God allows into our lives. With as much godliness as we have, we go straight through the trials that life brings.

“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”<sup>275</sup>

The promise of persecution couldn’t be plainer. That’s why believing Jesus instead of believing in Jesus is a necessary mindset change for converts to have. Otherwise when the difficulties come (and they’re coming!), new believers could be overpowered by the evil one.

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<sup>274</sup> Hebrews 13:5-6 NLT, [www.lightofhopeministries.com/the-lapp-brothers](http://www.lightofhopeministries.com/the-lapp-brothers); viewed Feb. 8, 2022  
<sup>275</sup> 2 Timothy 3:12 ESV

In the trials sure to come, believing Jesus will make you bold and brave.<sup>276</sup> Believing Jesus no matter what happens to you or around you, makes you an overcomer.<sup>277</sup> Believing Jesus is what it takes to be a spiritual champion.

## Ongoing & Growing Faith

A disciple's duty is obedience to the commands God writes on his heart and whispers into his spiritual ears.<sup>278</sup> Ongoing obedience to God's voice requires the type of faith that as Jesus describes it, "moves mountains."<sup>279</sup>

The type of faith that moves mountains is ongoing and growing. Because you have this kind of faith—disciples' faith, you are a spiritual champion.

## Faith for Daily Salvation

Obedience is also how disciples love God.<sup>280</sup> The disciple who has great faith, greatly loves God. As the following verse explains, disciples' faith is a daily increasing experience. Philippians 2:12 says,

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling."<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Revelations 12:11

<sup>277</sup> 1 John 4:4

<sup>278</sup> Isaiah 30:21; Jeremiah 31:33

<sup>279</sup> Luke 17:5-19

<sup>280</sup> 1 John 5:3

<sup>281</sup> NIV

Philippians 2:12 means we need faith not only for our beginning salvation but also for our 'daily' salvation.<sup>282</sup> Beginning salvation is for converts. Daily salvation is for disciples.

For disciples, faith in God is a day-by-day experience. Disciples' faith is ever-increasing trust in God no matter where He leads. And He might lead you into the valley of the shadow of death, a lonely place where darkness can rage at you from every side.<sup>283</sup>

Daily salvation is for disciples and true disciples need it.

"For God says, 'At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you.' Indeed, the 'right time' is now. Today is the day of salvation.'"<sup>284</sup>

A great Biblical example of disciples' faith is found in the book of Daniel, chapter three.

## **Faith Inside a Fiery Furnace**

In Daniel 3, a powerful king presents three Hebrew men with the choice of bowing before a golden idol or being burned alive in a fiery furnace. Hear what the three men say when the wicked king gives them one last chance to escape the fire and save their own necks.

"If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power,

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<sup>282</sup> Lamentations 3:22-26

<sup>283</sup> Psalm 23

<sup>284</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:2 NLT

Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."<sup>285</sup>

Those three men trusted God no matter what. They had disciples' faith. You can find out what happened next to these men of faith by reading Daniel chapter 3. It is an amazing story.

You do not have to be an adult to have ongoing and growing faith in God. Even children can have disciples' faith. Here is a true story about just that.

## **A Four-Year Old's Faith**

Some years ago my wife picked up our then four-year-old daughter from children's church. One of the teachers there told my wife our daughter was so upset during children's church she had to be taken outside the classroom. The teacher never knew why our daughter cried and cried. On the way home we found out.

That morning the teachers had the children act out the story of the three Hebrews and the golden idol, the story from Daniel chapter 3. Our daughter explained to us that she had hoped to be chosen to be one of the three Hebrew men so she would not be required to bow down to the golden idol. She was picked instead to be one of the many who bowed down to the idol.

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<sup>285</sup> Daniel 3:17-18 NLT

Our four-year-old said to me, “Dada, I would not bow down to the golden idol even for pretend.”

At four years old my little girl would not compromise her faith in God “even for pretend.”

Her teachers told her to bow down and the peer pressure to conform was great. The other children bowed to the golden idol. No friends or parents were there to encourage her to stand firm. She only had her unseen God to trust.

Unlike the three Hebrew men who had each other for support, our four-year old daughter was all alone with God. She trusted God to save her. She stood as firm as she knew how to stand and God saved her.<sup>286</sup> He made a way for her to escape the sin of bowing down to a golden idol even for pretend.

## Company of the Faithful

If you follow Jesus for any length of time, you will face tests of faith. Some of these tests of faith may be as hard for you as they were for the three Hebrew men and for my four-year-old daughter. Every disciple faces tests of his or her faith. When the tests come, be strong. Trust God to see you through. Be faithful to the end.<sup>287</sup> Then you will overcome.<sup>288</sup> And then

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<sup>286</sup> 1 Peter 1:6-9

<sup>287</sup> Revelation 14:12

<sup>288</sup> 1 John 4:4

you will find yourself in the company of heroes, including those brave men and women listed in Hebrews chapter 11.

Heroes of the faith will not compromise. They completely trust God. They totally love God. They obey Him to the end, whatever end may come; either God will save them today and every day, or they will not be saved.<sup>289</sup> Disciples are like that, they press on.<sup>290</sup>

No matter what test or trial or difficulty comes, disciples have faith in God to see them through.<sup>291</sup> Disciples are faithful to the end. You are a faithful disciple. Your faith pleases God.<sup>292</sup>

Without ongoing and growing faith, no man can be Jesus' disciple.<sup>293</sup> As disciples grow in their faith, they increasingly trust God.<sup>294</sup> Disciples believe God will save their souls even if their bodies die.<sup>295</sup>

You have that kind of faith, the kind of faith that makes you brave to the end, whatever end may come. Press on.

“For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.”<sup>296</sup>

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289 1 John 5:4, 1 Thessalonians 2:2

290 Hebrews 11:13-16

291 1 Corinthians 2:5

292 Hebrews 11:6

293 Romans 8:8

294 2 Corinthians 5:7

295 Hebrews 11:32-40

296 Hebrews 3:14 NLT

## Explaining 'Faith in God' to a Convert

Since you'll soon be turning converts into beginner disciples, you might explain faith in God to a new believer by first telling them this:

- 'Faith' means 'trust,' so to have faith in God means to trust God. Disciples do not trust in themselves, their money, their government or their church to see them through. Only God. Our only hope is God, and He will not disappoint us.
- When a disciple totally trusts God, he totally obeys God no matter what difficulties he faces. Disciples believe God alone will save them, and He does. He always does.
- Obedience to God is faith in action.
- Ongoing obedience to God is evidence of growing faith in God. A disciple's faith is ever increasing because he is always obeying
- Because God is in control, obedience always works out for good, no matter how it appears to people with worldly mindsets, so press on! You only have God to please, and He is pleased.
- The unseen enemy often sends threatening things to frighten disciples into disobeying God. Trying to scare faith out of us is part of the enemy's plan. Disciples are wise to the enemy's tactics. The enemy cannot defeat us.
- Fear and faith cannot co-exist in the same place within a person at the same time. While facing fear is normal Christianity, fear that keeps us from moving forward means we lack faith. If we lack faith, repentance and courage to trust God are needed.

- It is God's plan that we overcome the evil one, and He has given us the power to prevail. Through ongoing and growing faith in God, we are victorious. We win. You are a winner! Press on.

## Hebrews 11:1

An oft quoted Bible verse about faith is Hebrews 11:1; "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."<sup>297</sup>

Simply put, Hebrews 11:1 means that faith is that thing that causes a disciple to trust God day-by-day no matter what.<sup>298</sup>

Being a disciple means trusting God totally.<sup>299</sup> You can trust God totally,<sup>300</sup> you can always obey Him. God is faithful,<sup>301</sup> He will save you. He is with you. Be strong and remain faithful, God will help you overcome.

## Prayer:

*Jesus, increase my faith. Make me brave. Give me courage to obey You no matter what. Help me be faithful to You no matter what I face in life. Help me be a faithful disciple. Amen.*

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<sup>297</sup> NASB

<sup>298</sup> Matthew 28:20

<sup>299</sup> Joshua 1:9

<sup>300</sup> 2 Samuel 7:28

<sup>301</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Timothy 1:12, Hebrews 2:18



# INSTRUCTION ABOUT BAPTISMS

**I used to think there was only one type of Christian baptism– water baptism.**

Like many Christians, I was mistaken. If you, like me, thought there was only one baptism, hopefully this short teaching will clear things up.

The third elementary Christian principle that converts need to learn is “instruction about baptisms.”<sup>302</sup> “Instruction about baptisms” is an ingredient of spiritual milk.

Note that the word ‘baptisms’ is plural. In fact, three different baptisms make up this one ingredient of spiritual milk.<sup>303</sup> The three together comprise one elementary part of Christianity.<sup>304</sup>

It is our duty to teach all three baptisms to converts, otherwise they cannot become disciples.

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<sup>302</sup> *Hebrews 6:2 NASB*

<sup>303</sup> *1 Corinthians 3:2*

<sup>304</sup> *Hebrews 5:12*

## What 'Baptism' Means

The word 'baptism' implies washing, and 'washing' means getting clean.<sup>305</sup> It takes three types of baptisms for a Christian to get clean from the dirty worldly life he used to live and become like Jesus.<sup>306</sup>

In the Christian sense, getting clean means spiritually cleaning one's soul.<sup>307</sup> A man's soul is made of three parts; the mind, the emotions, and the will. Cleaning up the soul sometimes results in physical healing.<sup>308</sup> God wants our souls to be clean. He wants our physical bodies to be spiritually clean.<sup>309</sup> The three baptisms clean us.

## Three Baptisms

John the Baptist knew something about baptisms.<sup>310</sup> John's title, 'the Baptist,' means 'the baptizer.'<sup>311</sup> John was such an expert in baptisms that God the Father chose John to water baptize His Son, Jesus.<sup>312</sup>

In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist says there are three different baptisms.<sup>313</sup> Because 'the Baptizer' says there are three baptisms, there are three baptisms. Hear what John says:

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<sup>305</sup> Hebrews 6:2 CJB, Ephesians 5:26-27

<sup>306</sup> John 13:10

<sup>307</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:23

<sup>308</sup> Mark 9:17-29

<sup>309</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Luke 5:12-13

<sup>310</sup> John 11:11

<sup>311</sup> John 11:12

<sup>312</sup> Matthew 3:13-17

<sup>313</sup> Luke 3:16

“As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”<sup>314</sup>

In this one verse (Matthew 3:11), John cites three Christian baptisms. The three baptisms are:

1. Water Baptism
2. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit and
3. The Baptism of Fire

Christians call these three baptisms by different names. Believers may call the first one, ‘Water Baptism,’ the second, the ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit’ or ‘Spirit Baptism,’ and the third; ‘Fiery Trials.’

For a convert to become a disciple, all three baptisms are necessary. The three baptisms together make up one ingredient in spiritual milk. Let’s look briefly at each one.

## 1. Water Baptism

Water baptism is serious business.

A great preacher once said, “Properly practiced water baptism is a commitment to discipleship.” Then he added, “[If converts] are not willing to be disciplined and come under discipline and lay down their lives, they shouldn’t be baptized.”<sup>315</sup>

Jesus said, “... any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Matthew 3:11 NASB

<sup>315</sup> Derek Prince (1915-2003); [www.youtube.com/watch?v=47CvvougBsk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47CvvougBsk); viewed Feb. 8, 2002

<sup>316</sup> Luke 14:33 ESV

Water baptism is a person's renunciation of "all that he has."

In this verse the word "all" means everything including one's rights. We give up the rights to our life when we are water baptized. We are no longer our own boss in any detail large or small. If a person does not want to yield their rights to the Lord Jesus Christ, do not water baptize them.

Water baptism is a person's pledge to follow Jesus no matter the cost. The cost is always one's own life. This is what the great preacher meant and it is what Jesus said.

A friend of mine once described water baptism as a man's first act of becoming nothing.<sup>317</sup> My friend was spot on.<sup>318</sup>

We become nothing so that Jesus might become everything. Speaking of Jesus, John the Baptist expressed the same thought. John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease."<sup>319</sup>

## **Jesus Commands Water Baptism**

When Jesus commanded us to make disciples, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," He spoke of the act of water baptism.<sup>320</sup>

When we recall that there is not one recorded Christian in the Bible who after the day of Pentecost was not water baptized,

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<sup>317</sup> Nothing; *A Sober Discussion of Being and Non-Being* by George McLaughlin (2022), self-published.

<sup>318</sup> Soberworld.com; viewed April 6, 2022

<sup>319</sup> John 3:30 KJV

<sup>320</sup> Matthew 28:19 NASB

we could conclude that without water baptism it might be impossible to become a Christian. If this is true or not, I don't know. But why risk it?

What I do know is that both the act of water baptism and instruction about water baptism are basic to turning converts into disciples.<sup>321</sup> "Instruction about baptisms," is after all, an ingredient of spiritual milk.<sup>322</sup> It's one of only six things a convert can digest.

## What Water Baptism Means

When the convert goes under the water, his old life is truly buried with Christ.<sup>323</sup> Going under the water is 'dying with Christ.'<sup>324</sup> Going under the water brings death to the old way of living.<sup>325</sup> Coming up from the water is the resurrection of a new man.

Handing over the rights to his life to Jesus, the resurrected man follows Jesus.<sup>326</sup> Following Jesus, he no longer goes where he wants or says what he wants or thinks what he wants. He belongs to Jesus. All of him. And all of him is a new man.

Coming up from the water is arising from the old life of death to a new life of Life. Coming up from the water, he who was once spiritually dead is now just as spiritually alive as Christ Jesus.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> *Matthew* 28:19

<sup>322</sup> *Hebrews* 6:1-2 NASB

<sup>323</sup> *Romans* 6:19

<sup>324</sup> *Galatians* 2:20

<sup>325</sup> *Romans* 6:4

<sup>326</sup> *Colossians* 3:1

<sup>327</sup> *Ephesians* 2:3-6

When the Christian comes up from the water, he is no longer a slave to his old sinful nature or self-will.<sup>328</sup> His old nature is dead. He is a new man.<sup>329</sup> He is resurrected in Christ.<sup>330</sup>

The Bible explains water baptism like this:

“For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.”<sup>331</sup>

## **Instruction About Water Baptism**

The foundational Christian principle of water baptism is not just the physical act of water baptism. Per Hebrews 6:2, it is also “instruction about” water baptism. For a convert to become a disciple, he must learn what this baptism means.

You can teach what’s written here to the convert and then water baptize him. Some church or churchman might say you are not allowed to water baptize a convert, but I cannot find that restriction in the Bible. If you know of such a rule, show me the Bible verse and I will give you \$100.00.

“... you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.”<sup>332</sup>

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328 *Romans 6:3-7*

329 *2 Corinthians 5:17*

330 *Romans 6:11, Romans 8:11*

331 *Romans 6:4 NLT*

332 *1 Peter 2:9 NLT*

## Who Performs Water Baptism

The Bible does not say who in the church may perform water baptisms. One of my preacher-friends says that if you get a man saved then you need to baptize him. In the book of Acts this is exactly what happened with Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip got the Ethiopian saved and then Philip immediately water baptized him.<sup>333</sup> I like the idea.

With millions of new converts soon coming into the kingdom, the church may not have time to wait for an official preacher or bishop to do all the needed water baptisms. If the Holy Spirit leads you to water baptize a convert, do not be afraid. Like Philip, you can do it. You can always obey.

A convert's water baptism should be done sooner rather than later. Why should a convert delay his obedience to King Jesus? Why would a disciple like you withhold the blessing of water baptism from a convert who needs it? Why keep milk from the babies? I can think of no good reason. Can you? Like Philip immediately baptizing the Ethiopian, we should water baptize converts as soon as possible.

## Baptized in the Name

One of my preacher-friends was unhappy with the idea that I was water baptized "in the name of the Father, the Son and

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<sup>333</sup> Acts 8:26-39

the Holy Spirit."<sup>334</sup> These are the words that Jesus said to use when water baptizing a convert.

My preacher-friend wanted me to be water baptized "in the name of Jesus." He thinks there is a difference. My friend thinks "the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" is "Jesus." My uncertainty about his viewpoint is unimportant.

Because my friend was sincere when he said he wanted to re-baptize me "in the name of Jesus," I quietly prayed and asked Jesus what He wanted me to do. In my heart I heard Jesus say, "Let him do it." That was good enough for me. I let my friend baptize me "in the name of Jesus" right then and there. This is what happened next.

That certain preacher-friend has a pool in his backyard. The day this happened was in February and the pool water was cold. I remember taking my first step into that chilly water. I thought Jesus should do something about the cold water and quietly told Him so. He did.

After that first step into the wintry water, I never felt the coldness again. It was a small miracle. I have heard others tell similar stories about being baptized in cold water and not feeling the cold. I have also heard first-hand stories about people being baptized in unsanitary water and not getting sick.

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<sup>334</sup> *Matthew 28:19*



My 'Jesus-only' friend was happy that he baptized me "in the name of Jesus." I was glad that he was happy. And I was happy that I was not cold in that chilly water. The best thing is, I obeyed King Jesus in something that seemed otherwise pointless to me.

There is no substitute for obedience.<sup>335</sup> Obedience to the Holy Spirit is love for God.<sup>336</sup> I can get over being pointless if I can love my God.

## **When to Perform Water Baptism**

Disciples should never make excuses about not baptizing someone because the water is cold or unsanitary or the timing is not good. Let us obey King Jesus quickly. That way we will not withhold the blessing of water baptism from any convert. Disciples never prohibit or delay converts from becoming beginner disciples of Jesus.

Jesus commanded us to make disciples. If we do not water baptize converts then we disobey Jesus. Beloved, we never keep spiritual milk from spiritual babies because our flesh considers it inconvenient, untimely or unwise to do so. That is a sin and our sin hurts Jesus' heart. We who say we love Jesus should not intentionally hurt His heart.

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<sup>335</sup> *John 15:10*

<sup>336</sup> *John 14:15*

Like Jesus, we should be about our heavenly Father's business.<sup>337</sup> Making disciples of Jesus is our business. Being about our Father's business is our purpose. Because our lives are not our own, what we think about our purpose doesn't matter.<sup>338</sup> Obedience matters. Our heavenly Father is responsible for the results of our obedience.

### **Prayer:**

*Jesus, if you tell me to water baptize a convert, I will do it. I will help converts put their old man to death and then raise them up in newness of life in You. Amen.*

## **2. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

The second baptism that John the Baptist mentions in Matthew 3:11 is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

To be baptized in the Holy Spirit means to be soaked in the Spirit of God. This is a foundational Christian principle and an important ingredient of spiritual milk. Without a Holy Spirit baptism a convert— a spiritual baby, cannot grow up and become a disciple.

### **Who is the Holy Spirit?**

Some Bibles use the words 'Holy Ghost' instead of 'Holy Spirit.' Sometimes the Bible just says, 'Spirit.'<sup>339</sup> All three

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<sup>337</sup> Luke 2:49 KJV

<sup>338</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>339</sup> Matthew 10:20, Matthew 12:28, Luke 4:14, John 3:5-8, John 6:63, John 7:39, John 15:26, Acts 2:4

names mean the same thing. They all mean 'God.' The Holy Spirit is God.<sup>340</sup>

Just like our heavenly Father is God and Jesus is God, the Holy Spirit is God.<sup>341</sup> Since all three Personalities are God, many Christians use the word 'Trinity' to describe Them.<sup>342</sup> The words 'three' and 'trinity' have the same root meaning. In the Christian sense, the word 'Trinity' means 'three Persons as one God.'<sup>343</sup>

One way to think of the Holy Spirit is as a Person.<sup>344</sup> The Bible says the Holy Spirit is our Friend.<sup>345</sup> The Bible says He is our Helper and Teacher.<sup>346</sup>

A preacher I respect calls the Holy Spirit, "Mr. Holy Spirit." A friendly 'Mr. Holy Spirit' is another way to think of this Person of God.

Another way to think of the Holy Spirit is like the wind.<sup>347</sup> Like the wind, you cannot see the Holy Spirit. You cannot tell where He came from or where He is going. Also like the wind, the Holy Spirit can be powerful.<sup>348</sup>

In the Bible the word sometimes used for 'wind' is also the same word used for 'Spirit.' The Old Testament Hebrew word

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<sup>340</sup> Genesis 1:2, Psalm 33:6, 2 Peter 1:21, Revelation 22:17

<sup>341</sup> Acts 5:3-4

<sup>342</sup> In Genesis 1:1 ("In the beginning God ...") the Hebrew word translated into "God" is "Elohim." Elohim is the plural form of El, an indication of the plurality of the one true God.

<sup>343</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4

<sup>344</sup> Ephesians 4:30, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 1 Corinthians 2:10

<sup>345</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:14

<sup>346</sup> John 14:26

<sup>347</sup> Acts 2:2

<sup>348</sup> John 3:8

for both 'Spirit' and 'wind' is "ruach" and the New Testament Greek word that means both is "pnuema."<sup>349</sup>

The Holy Spirit is also like breath.<sup>350</sup> Breath represents the life in a person.

We can put together these two ideas about the Holy Spirit, the two words 'power' and 'life'. When we put 'power' and 'life' together, it helps us see that the Holy Spirit is the power and the life of God.<sup>351</sup> This is also a correct way to think about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the power and life of God.<sup>352</sup>

When a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit, he is soaked in the power and life of God. This is the core meaning of the phrase, 'Spirit baptism.'

## **What Does the Holy Spirit Do?**

The Holy Spirit is our Helper.<sup>353</sup> The Holy Spirit is not 'the Doer.' The Holy Spirit helps us do what God wants us to do.<sup>354</sup> The Holy Spirit helps us obey God.<sup>355</sup>

When we start to do what God wants us to do, the Holy Spirit helps us fully obey.<sup>356</sup> The Holy Spirit never helps us do anything that God does not want us to do.

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<sup>349</sup> Strong's H7307 and G4154

<sup>350</sup> John 20:22

<sup>351</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 1 Corinthians 6:19, John 3:5, Romans 8:9

<sup>352</sup> Ezekiel 37:9-14

<sup>353</sup> John 14:26

<sup>354</sup> John 15:26

<sup>355</sup> 1 John 5:3

<sup>356</sup> John 16:7

The Holy Spirit acts with the disciple. The Holy Spirit and the disciple are in a sense, a team. With the Holy Spirit, disciples can obey God.<sup>357</sup> A disciple can obey God because he possesses the power and life of God. What man is more potent than the one who possesses the power and life of God?

Because disciples are baptized with the Holy Spirit, disciples have God with them. They have God in them. With God, how can a disciple fail?<sup>358</sup> With the power and life of God soaking them through, how can a disciple be anything but a spiritual champion?<sup>359</sup> With God, all things are possible.<sup>360</sup>

When you are baptized with the Holy Spirit, you possess the power and life of God. With the Holy Spirit, you have everything you need to be a spiritual champion.

## **Philippians 4:13**

Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength."<sup>361</sup> Converts sometimes think this verse means that God empowers them to do whatever they want to do. That is incorrect.

When a person thinks they can do whatever they want to,

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357 1 Peter 1:15-16

358 Matthew 19:26

359 Mark 9:23

360 Mark 10:27

361 NLT

they become a law unto themselves.<sup>362</sup> Such a worldly mind-set leads invariably to error.

What Philippians 4:13 means is something altogether different than “I can do anything.” Philippians 4:13 means that disciples can do everything the Holy Spirit tells them to do.<sup>363</sup>

With the power and life of God in us, we cannot fail if we obey God. We can fight the good fight and win.<sup>364</sup> We can be spiritual champions.<sup>365</sup> We can “overcome the evil one.”<sup>366</sup>

Because you are a disciple of Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit. Because you have the Holy Spirit, you are empowered by God to be a spiritual champion.<sup>367</sup> If your hope is in Christ Jesus, and you don’t have the power and life of God in you, then you need this baptism.

## Your Kingdom Come

When we pray the Lord’s Prayer, in part we say, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”<sup>368</sup>

Converts usually believe this phrase means asking God to come to earth and cause other people to do what He wants them to do. Converts are mistaken.

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<sup>362</sup> *The theological word for lawlessness is antinomianism.*

<sup>363</sup> 1 John 5:3

<sup>364</sup> 1 Timothy 6:12

<sup>365</sup> Revelation 3:21

<sup>366</sup> 1 John 2:14 NASB

<sup>367</sup> Revelation 12:11

<sup>368</sup> Matthew 6:10 NASB

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” is a request for God’s kingdom to come forth through us. In other words, it is a prayer for the Holy Spirit to help us do what our heavenly Father desires us to do.<sup>369</sup> Knowing this prayer expresses our personal hope to obey God’s desires, we could rephrase it this way:

“May Your kingdom come out through me and through all of your disciples; may Your will be done through me and through all your disciples here on earth just as everyone does Your will in heaven.”

When disciples obey the Holy Spirit, God’s will is done on earth just as it is done in heaven.

We are commanded to do God’s will.<sup>370</sup> If we have been Spirit baptized then we have received the power and life of God so that we can accomplish God’s will. We can turn converts into disciples. We can do anything God asks us to do.

## **Who Baptizes a Convert with the Holy Spirit?**

This is a good question. The Bible seems to give different answers. By taking a closer look at the Scriptures, we can see these different answers are really the same answer. In short, the answer to the question, “Who Baptizes a Convert with the Holy Spirit?” is this: God baptizes converts with the Holy Spirit. God does it.

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<sup>369</sup> Matthew 5:48, Job 42:2

<sup>370</sup> Matthew 28:20

You might be wondering where in the Bible one finds these different-but-same answers. Here are a few examples:

1. John the Baptist says that Jesus baptizes converts with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, John 1:33). And Jesus is God.<sup>371</sup>
2. Jesus says that His heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to all who ask (Luke 11:13, Acts 1:4-5). The heavenly Father is God.<sup>372</sup>
3. Then there is a story in the Book of Acts that seems to show the Holy Spirit doing the baptism all by Himself. This story is recorded in Acts 2:2-4. Part of that passage says,

“And suddenly a noise like a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit ...”

The Holy Spirit is God.<sup>373</sup>

4. There are also Bible passages where it seems like disciples baptize converts with the Holy Spirit. In these passages it is really the Holy Spirit within the disciples baptizing converts with Himself. And as we know, the Holy Spirit is God.<sup>374</sup> Here are two of those stories:
  - a) In Acts 8:4-17 a man named Philip preached about Jesus and did miracles in a place called Samaria. Samaria is not far from the city of Jerusalem. When many Samaritans believed Philip’s message, Philip water baptized them.<sup>375</sup>

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371 John 1:1, John 8:58, John 10:30, John 20:28, Colossians 2:9

372 Matthew 23:9, Luke 10:21-22, John 1:4, 1 Corinthians 8:6, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Ephesians 4:6

373 Psalm 139:7-8, Isaiah 40:13, John 14:7, John 16:13, 2 Peter 1:21

374 Psalm 139:7-8, Isaiah 40:13, John 16:13, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11

375 Acts 8:4-12



Although Philip had the Holy Spirit inside of him, none of the Samaritan converts received the baptism of the Holy Spirit through Philip. God did not use Philip to Spirit baptize converts, and Philip was an apostle.<sup>376</sup> An apostle is a disciple who has been given a portion of God's governmental authority here on earth.

Soon after Philip water baptized the new Samaritan converts, the apostles Peter and John learned about it. Peter and John were staying nearby in Jerusalem. Like Philip, Peter and John had been entrusted with some of God's governmental authority here on earth.

When Peter and John learned that none of the new Samaritan converts had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they left Jerusalem and traveled to Samaria.

Arriving in Samaria, they prayed for the new converts and placed their hands on them. When Peter and John did this, the new converts received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>377</sup>

There is another Bible story like this, a story where at first glance it seems like a man baptizes converts with the Holy Spirit.<sup>378</sup>

- b) While traveling, Paul found a group of about twelve men who believed in Jesus.<sup>379</sup> Like Peter

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<sup>376</sup> Some scholars believe that this Philip was Philip the Evangelist, a person different than Philip the Apostle (cf. Acts 6:2-5).

<sup>377</sup> Acts 8:14-17

<sup>378</sup> Acts 19:1-7

<sup>379</sup> Acts 19:1

and John, Paul had also received some of God's governmental authority here on earth. Paul was an apostle. Like his friends, Paul was in the business of turning converts into disciples.

When Paul found the twelve converts, he asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed.<sup>380</sup> They said no. The men told Paul they had never heard of the Holy Spirit.<sup>381</sup> So Paul first water baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus and then Paul placed his hands on them.<sup>382</sup> Maybe Paul placed his hands on their heads as he prayed for them to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says, "... when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied."<sup>383</sup>

It was neither Peter nor John or Paul who baptized converts with the Holy Spirit. Rather it was the Holy Spirit inside of Peter, inside of John and inside of Paul Who baptized converts with the Holy Spirit. God baptizes converts with the Holy Spirit, not man.

The apostles Peter, John and Paul had the ministry of baptizing converts with the Holy Spirit. Apostle Philip did not. While all four of these men had been given some of God's governmental authority here on earth, God did not choose to work through all of them to baptize converts with the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>380</sup> Acts 19:2  
<sup>381</sup> Acts 19:2  
<sup>382</sup> Acts 19:4-6  
<sup>383</sup> Acts 19:6 NLT

Only some believers are used by the Holy Spirit to baptize converts with the Holy Spirit. Why this is true, I do not know. God knows. Ultimately it is God who baptizes converts with the Holy Spirit, not men. God performs the baptism of the Holy Spirit any way He wants. He is God.

If God asks you to baptize someone with the Holy Spirit, let God baptize the convert through you. Lay your hands gently upon their head and pray for them to be thoroughly soaked with the Holy Spirit. God will do it.

## **Asking for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

It is perfectly fine to ask God for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In Luke 11:13, Jesus says that the heavenly Father promises to give the Holy Spirit to all who ask Him:

“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”<sup>384</sup>

Don't be afraid to make this Bible verse promise (Luke 11:13) into a daily prayer.

I asked and kept asking for the Holy Spirit until God answered me, and if you persist, God will answer you too. God does not show partiality.<sup>385</sup> He will soak you in His Holy Spirit just as He does all those who ask and keep on asking.

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<sup>384</sup> Luke 11:13 ESV

<sup>385</sup> Acts 10:34

If God has not called you to baptize converts with the Holy Spirit and you know converts who need it, maybe you should show them the Luke 11:13 promise and then explain that they can ask for the Holy Spirit themselves.

Converts need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit they cannot survive the last baptism, the baptism of fire.

### **Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, please baptize me completely with the Holy Spirit.<sup>386</sup> Soak me with your Spirit. Help me to hear your Voice and give me the Power to obey You no matter what. If you want me to baptize converts with the Holy Spirit then by Your help I will do it. Amen.*

### **3. Baptism of Fire**

The Baptism of fire is the third baptism John the Baptist mentions in Matthew 3:11. Understanding the baptism of fire is an important ingredient to spiritual milk.<sup>387</sup> Experiencing this baptism is a requirement for every true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without the Holy Spirit, none can survive the baptism of fire. It can be a challenge to endure.

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<sup>386</sup> Luke 11:13

<sup>387</sup> Hebrews 6:1-2

The baptism of fire was the method by which the heavenly Father brought His Son, Jesus, through to perfection.<sup>388</sup> The method the Father used to perfect His Son was “suffering unjustly.”<sup>389</sup> The Father used the “fiery trial” to purify His Son in the same way a silversmith or goldsmith uses a furnace to purify costly metals.<sup>390</sup>

The Bible says, “Although He (Jesus) was a son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”<sup>391</sup>

The baptism of fire Jesus underwent is the very same process Jesus uses to sanctify those who obey Him. To be sanctified means to be pure and holy for God’s use. Only those who obey Jesus are His disciples. The baptism of fire sanctifies disciples. It makes them useful to God.

No, it is not fun to undergo the sanctification process, but it is the only way to become holy. As it was for the Teacher so it is for His students.<sup>392</sup> Disciples who patiently endure the baptism of fire to the end will find themselves complete, holy and perfect.<sup>393</sup> Enduring to the end, they become worthy of our Lord.

Disciples who become worthy of our Lord Jesus enter into the marriage relationship with Him, for the Lord cannot be

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388 *Hebrews 2:10*

389 *1 Peter 2:19 NIV*

390 *1 Peter 4:12 NASB, Malachi 3:1-4, Proverbs 17:3 and 27:21*

391 *Hebrews 5:8-9 ESV*

392 *Luke 6:40*

393 *Hebrews 2:11*

joined in an unworthy union wherein two become one. Doing so would defile the Lord Jesus.<sup>394</sup>

Converts who are not taught about the baptism of fire will not understand what is happening to them when ‘the fire’ comes upon them. Ready or not, the baptism of fire comes on “all who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus.”<sup>395</sup>

There is no honorable way to avoid this challenging aspect of the Christian life. Like the process of removing wheat from chaff or kernels of corn from a cob, the baptism of fire shakes apart everything in a believer that can be shaken.<sup>396</sup> To become worthy of Jesus, everything in a disciple that is ungodly must go.

Let this baptism runs its course. Go straight through every undeserved difficulty. Patiently endure evil.<sup>397</sup> Be intellectually honest. When this baptism is completed, it will have brought you through to perfection.<sup>398</sup> It will bring you face-to-face with Jesus.

## **Eight Names**

In the short passage of 1 Peter 4:12-19, the baptism of fire is called eight different names. Take your time reading these

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<sup>394</sup> *Ephesians 4:13-15*  
<sup>395</sup> *2 Timothy 3:12 NET*  
<sup>396</sup> *Hebrews 12:27-29*  
<sup>397</sup> *2 Timothy 2:24*  
<sup>398</sup> *Matthew 5:48*

eight names. You need to know what's coming. It's tough.

This baptism is described as:

1. the fiery ordeal among you<sup>399</sup>
2. your testing<sup>400</sup>
3. sharing in the sufferings of Christ<sup>401</sup>
4. being reviled for the name of Christ<sup>402</sup>
5. suffering as a Christian<sup>403</sup>
6. God's judgment on the household of God<sup>404</sup>
7. difficulty,<sup>405</sup> and
8. suffering according to the will of God<sup>406</sup>

Contemplating these eight names helps us see that the baptism of fire is painful. Undoubtedly, the baptism of fire can be difficult to endure, but determined disciples like you won't quit.<sup>407</sup> For those who endure to the end, there is great reward.

The Apostle Paul said of the baptism's work, "My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."<sup>408</sup> The 'crucifixion' Paul endured was painful but through it, Christ lived in him.

When Jesus explains the baptism of fire, He encourages us to press on, saying, "everyone will hate you because you are my followers. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."<sup>409</sup>

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399 1 Peter 4:12

400 1 Peter 4:12

401 1 Peter 4:13

402 1 Peter 4:13

403 1 Peter 4:16

404 1 Peter 4:17

405 1 Peter 4:18

406 1 Peter 4:19

407 Matthew 10:22; Matthew 24:13; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Hebrews 3:14

408 Galatians 2:20a NLT

409 Mark 13:13 NLT

## The Promise

The baptism of fire is promised to every disciple. It cannot be honorably avoided. The promise of its coming is given in 2 Timothy 3:12:

“Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”<sup>410</sup>

This key verse is God’s promise of the baptism of fire.

When Jesus said, “Take up your cross, and follow Me,” He was not inviting His disciples to a Sunday ice cream social.<sup>411</sup> Jesus was letting us know those who follow Him will share in His unjust sufferings. But take heart! Those sufferings serve to make us complete and perfect, like Christ.<sup>412</sup>

Christians who avoid unjust sufferings might be converts but they cannot be disciples. Those who evade trials cannot become worthy of Jesus. Go straight through every difficulty. Never say, “Well, it will be okay if I yield once.” No, be strong and courageous. God is with you.<sup>413</sup> Go straight. You will overcome the difficulty and be victorious. And if you have compromised, repent. Return to the narrow path and continue your journey with Jesus.

“Our God is a consuming fire,” and those who draw near to

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<sup>410</sup> NLT

<sup>411</sup> *Matthew 16:24 NLT*

<sup>412</sup> *Hebrews 2:10, Galatians 2:20*

<sup>413</sup> *Joshua 1:9*



God, draw near in Spirit and truth.<sup>414</sup> Everything in us that is not ‘Spirit and truth’ is burned away in this fire. Suffering as Christ rids us of things in our souls that are not of God. Suffering for wanting to be godly makes us godly. Unjust suffering is normal Christianity.<sup>415</sup>

Any seasoned disciple can confirm this last statement with personal stories of suffering that if told plainly will make you stand in awe of his resolve to follow Christ Jesus. Suffering unjustly is normal for disciples. Having angels stand in awe of you is part of the end result.<sup>416</sup>

Converts should also understand that the baptism of fire is usually not a one-time event.<sup>417</sup> Converts need to know that the baptism of fire can go on day-after-day for years on end.<sup>418</sup> Here is what I mean.

## **Into His Image**

Every October I begin reflecting on the past year and start thinking about the year ahead. For about two decades straight I would get to October and think to myself, “There is no way next year can be harder than this past year. My life has got to get easier than it has been. It is impossible for my life to become more difficult.” Every October I said

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<sup>414</sup> *Hebrews 12:29 NASB, John 4:23-24*

<sup>415</sup> *2 Timothy 3:12*

<sup>416</sup> *1 Corinthians 6:3*

<sup>417</sup> *Job 1:12, Job 2:6*

<sup>418</sup> *1 Corinthians 15:31*

this, and every year following was harder than the one I just survived.

Today, I can neither say my baptism of fire is ended nor can I say it needs to be. I am not as clean as Jesus. I am not perfectly holy. But I want to be. I want to be like Jesus. The baptism of fire is washing me clean. It is transforming me “into His image with ever-increasing glory.”<sup>419</sup>

Always be a friend to someone who is suffering as Christ. Always. Even Jesus needed help enduring His fiery trials.<sup>420</sup> If Jesus needed help to endure then we will all need help from someone sometime. Always be a friend to a Christian who is enduring trials. Always.

If you have spent much time in the baptism of fire then you know it can make your heart hurt as well as your mind and body. The baptism of fire can be an emotional and psychological pressure cooker. God allows the baptism of fire to come upon disciples so we can be like Jesus.<sup>421</sup> Jesus suffered in heart, mind and body.<sup>422</sup> It is normal Christianity for His disciples to endure the same. Whatever comes, don't quit.

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<sup>419</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:18 NIV

<sup>420</sup> Mark 15:21

<sup>421</sup> James 1:2-4

<sup>422</sup> Isaiah 53, Matthew 26:39

## Normal Christianity

The baptism of fire is normal Christianity.<sup>423</sup>

When the baptism of fire comes unexpectedly, disciples are not surprised.<sup>424</sup> We consider it a joy.<sup>425</sup> We entrust our souls to God and press on in our bodies.<sup>426</sup> God knows what is best for us.<sup>427</sup> God loves us with His whole heart.<sup>428</sup> He is the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd will see us safely through this life to the next.

If we suffer for the sake of righteousness then one day we will rejoice at the glories those hardships create in us.<sup>429</sup> Unjust suffering comes upon us because the Spirit and glory of God rests on us.<sup>430</sup> Whatever comes, beloved, press on!<sup>431</sup> Unjust suffering is proof that you are being transformed into Christ's image.<sup>432</sup> It is evidence that this world is not worthy of you.<sup>433</sup>

When the baptism of fire comes, remember that you are blessed and do not be ashamed. You have been found worthy to share in the sufferings of Christ Jesus, the King of the universe.<sup>434</sup> Glory awaits you. Press on!

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423 1 Peter 4:12

424 1 Peter 4:12

425 James 1:2

426 2 Corinthians 6:4, 1 Peter 4:19

427 1 Peter 4:19

428 John 3:16

429 1 Peter 4:13

430 1 Peter 4:14

431 Philippians 3:12-13

432 2 Corinthians 3:18

433 Hebrews 11:36-38

434 1 Peter 4:12-19

## My Wife's Fiery Trial

My wife has a story of a fiery trial to share with you. Like every disciple, she has suffered much for desiring to live a godly life in Christ Jesus.<sup>435</sup> Hear what she has to say. This story is hers. She wrote it.

*Weddings are supposed to be the happiest time of a girl's life. Yes, I was incredibly happy to get married. But the time of my wedding was also a time of intense testing and persecution.*

*John proposed on our first date. His proposal was an answer to my prayers for God to send the right man at the right time, and for him to make his intentions clear. But I wanted to hear from God that John was the man He has sent, not just from John.*

*My aunt, who has been a great spiritual mentor to me after my mother died when I was young, came with me on a day of prayer. I spent a day seeking the Lord about whether to accept John's unusual marriage proposal.*

*The result of my day in prayer was that I heard the Lord clearly say to me, "This is the one I have sent." After my heavenly Father said this to me, there was no doubt in my mind but to obey Him. I was marrying John.*

*When I told my church community my happy news, the religious people went up in arms. They went on and on about their rules and regulations. They said I needed to be engaged for a year before marriage. That rule is not in the Bible. None of their rules were in the Bible. They were very mean to me and to John.*

*A preacher we asked to marry us falsely accused me of being with child. Many of my friends were against this marriage that*

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<sup>435</sup> 2 Timothy 3:12

*God had planned, and they hurt me. My heart hurt because my friends were against me obeying God.*

*All I knew was what my heavenly Father had told me. As I did many times before, I simply obeyed my Father in heaven. What my heavenly Father told me to do did not have to be first approved by my friends or church community or a preacher for me to do it. I do not have all the answers. When I hear from my heavenly Father, I simply obey.*

*My obedience to marry John cost me many friendships, some of which the Lord has restored. Others have not yet been repaired. But the Lord is faithful. He helped me forgive those who hurt me, no matter what hatred they spewed, lies they told or misinformation they believed.*

*I am glad I obeyed my heavenly Father. John is a wonderful husband. We have a beautiful family. Even though I suffered for obeying God, I am joyful that I listened to God instead of my friends.*

My amazing wife understands what the Scripture means when it says, "We must obey God rather than any human authority."<sup>436</sup> She knows the eternal value of patiently enduring the baptism of fire until God calls her forth from the flames. Like my beloved wife, you can walk the straight and narrow way all the way. You can overcome. Press on!

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<sup>436</sup> Acts 5:29 NLT

## Sanctification

The baptism of fire helps us live more and more like Jesus, and less and less like the world.<sup>437</sup> In other words, the baptism of fire produces sanctification. Sanctification is a fancy word for the process of becoming spiritually cleaner, for becoming more like Jesus.

Sanctification cannot be learned through Bible study or gotten by self-effort. Sanctification has nothing to do with church membership or being in church leadership. It has nothing to do with how many years one has been a Christian or how many notable things one has accomplished for the Kingdom.<sup>438</sup> Sanctification comes only through the baptism of fire. Sanctification makes us holy.<sup>439</sup> Christians who avoid unjust suffering never become worthy of Jesus.

Go straight through the fire to the end.

## Laughter in a Fiery Trial<sup>440</sup>

A friend whom I admire was suffering terribly and complaining loudly to Jesus about his undeserved difficulties. As my friend complained about his fiery trial, he suddenly saw himself standing in front of Jesus while He hung on the cross. My friend said Jesus looked awfully beaten.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 Corinthians 1:29, James 5:3

<sup>438</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

<sup>439</sup> 1 Peter 1:15-16

<sup>440</sup> Proverbs 17:22

<sup>441</sup> Isaiah 53

As my friend stood gaping at his crucified Savior, Jesus opened one eye, half smiled and whispered, “So, you think you got it bad?”

Immediately, my friend saw the silliness in his complaining.<sup>442</sup> He thanked Jesus for making a good joke about his unjust suffering and more so, for sending the suffering. My friend is brave. He wants to be pure and holy, worthy of Christ Jesus.

As we make our way through the baptism of fire, we live more and more in step with the Holy Spirit and less and less by the power of our self-will.<sup>443</sup> We think and act more and more like Jesus and less and less like the world. Passing through fiery trials, we become less worldly and more godly. We become like Jesus. Living like Jesus pleases God.<sup>444</sup>

When you are suffering a fiery trial, my friend, press on.<sup>445</sup> If you fall, get up.<sup>446</sup> If you fall again, get up again. Don’t stay down. Get back up. God is with you.<sup>447</sup> You will make it through.<sup>448</sup> When you make it through, you will be more like Jesus. You will be purer, holier, godlier. Press on!<sup>449</sup> The heavenly host is cheering for you.<sup>450</sup> I am too!

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<sup>442</sup> James 1:2

<sup>443</sup> John 3:6, John 6:63, Romans 3:20, Romans 6:19

<sup>444</sup> 1 Titus 2:2-3

<sup>445</sup> Philippians 3:12-14

<sup>446</sup> Proverbs 24:16

<sup>447</sup> Isaiah 41:10

<sup>448</sup> Hebrews 13:5-6

<sup>449</sup> Philippians 3:12-14

<sup>450</sup> Hebrews 12:1

## Baptism of Fire and Father's Discipline

The baptism of fire should not be confused with the heavenly Father's discipline.<sup>451</sup> While the baptism of fire and the Father's discipline are both normal (and unpleasant) Christian experiences, the two are not the same.

The baptism of fire and the Father's discipline have different causes even if they serve the same purpose.<sup>452</sup> Their shared purpose is to make us holy.<sup>453</sup> Only those who are holy can be used by God.

Christians are disciplined by their heavenly Father for their disobedience, for acting ungodly when knowing better. Suffering for acting ungodly is 'deserved' suffering. The baptism of fire is not like that.

Christians suffer the baptism of fire for being obedient, for being godly, for having godly desires. In the baptism of fire we suffer like Jesus, we suffer for being righteous, for acting like Christ.

Jesus said that when we nobly endure undeserved suffering it proves that our home is in heaven and that our reward there is great.<sup>454</sup> Jesus Himself is our Great Reward.<sup>455</sup> The Bible promises,

"God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you

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<sup>451</sup> Hebrews 12:10-11, Revelation 3:19

<sup>452</sup> Hebrews 12:6

<sup>453</sup> Romans 8:28

<sup>454</sup> Luke 6:21-22

<sup>455</sup> Genesis 15:1



because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.”<sup>456</sup>

## Getting Out of the Fire

God may not save you from the baptism of fire when you think you should be saved but He will get you through it. God will save you.<sup>457</sup> At the right time, God will call you from the fire. Wait for His call. He will call.<sup>458</sup> You will make it. Hang in there to the end. Do not take a shortcut or try to wiggle out of unjust hardship. Press on!

When the three Hebrew men were thrown into the fiery furnace because they would rather have their bodies burn than bow to a golden idol, they stood unharmed in the blaze until the king called them out.<sup>459</sup> While the three men stood in the fire, they lost their earthly bonds and met Jesus face-to-face.<sup>460</sup> The baptism of fire is like that.

The baptism of fire transforms those who stay to the end into the image and likeness of Jesus.<sup>461</sup>

As you endure to the end, you will lose your ‘earthly bonds.’ Earthly bonds are the ungodly things inside you that spiritually slip you up and slow you down. As you endure to the

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<sup>456</sup> Matthew 5:11-12 NLT

<sup>457</sup> John 3:16, 1 John 4:8

<sup>458</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Corinthians 1:18

<sup>459</sup> Daniel 3:26

<sup>460</sup> Daniel 3:25

<sup>461</sup> Genesis 1:26

end, you will meet Jesus face-to-face.<sup>462</sup> Then you will share in all that is Christ's.<sup>463</sup> You can do it. Endure to the end.

## **Prayer:**

*Jesus, please purify me in the baptism of fire. I want to be pure and holy, useful for every good work.<sup>464</sup> Help me remain faithful throughout the purification process. I know You will never leave me or forsake me.<sup>465</sup> You are with me always, even to the end.<sup>466</sup> Amen.*

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<sup>462</sup> Matthew 24:13

<sup>463</sup> Hebrews 3:14-19

<sup>464</sup> 1 Peter 1:15-16

<sup>465</sup> Hebrews 13:5-6

<sup>466</sup> Matthew 28:20

# THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

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**When I was ordained as a minister, the leading minister placed his hands on my head.** Warmth came from his hands and spread through my body. That warmth was a sign of godly authority coming into me. When one Christian lays hands on another, it may not always feel warm but it can. This is the laying on of hands.

You can also describe the laying on of hands as performing work according to God's will. Or you could say the laying on of hands is working by God's power. Either is a good definition. But the first definition I gave you is older, more common.

Historically, the laying on of hands is considered to be the act of giving another person godly authority. This took place when I was ordained. But this is not the only aspect of laying on of hands. There are other facets of this foundational Christian principle, this fourth ingredient of spiritual milk.<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>467</sup> Hebrews 6:1-2

Converts need to learn about the laying on of hands, experience it and practice it, in order to be Jesus' disciples. The laying on of hands is easy to understand and easy to do. It's not just about making ministers. Any disciple can lay hands on another when the Spirit directs him to, and you can teach converts to do it too. You must.

## Teaching a Convert

Basically the laying on of hands can be explained to a convert like this:

1. The Power of God is in His hands.
2. We are created in God's image.<sup>468</sup> Since we have the Holy Spirit, God's power is in our hands.
3. When we do God's work, we do it with our hands. In other words,
4. As we obey the Holy Spirit, we do God's work via God's power.
5. Doing God's work by God's power is the laying on of hands.

It's that simple.

## Ordaining Ministers

That said, let us look deeper into the laying on of hands from the perspective that you are more likely to hear about in Bible school or seminary, that is, the act of giving another person godly authority to minister.

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<sup>468</sup> Genesis 1:26

The Bible explains that when a Christian leader places his hands atop the head of another Christian, the leader imparts godly authority to the other believer.<sup>469</sup> Usually the laying on of hands is done along with a prayer of blessing.<sup>470</sup>

We never lay hands on someone without the Holy Spirit prompting us to do it, even if it's not for ordination.<sup>471</sup> However the Lord wants us to use this spiritual tool, remember that the laying on of hands is a special rite. It's powerful.

Since we never try to do God's work through our own power, we always work in concert with the Holy Spirit. We do our work via God's power. We lay hands on whom God wants us to lay hands. Part of being a good disciple is only doing the works God intends for us to do, whatever that work may be.

## Healing

Another reason to lay hands on a person is for healing. While placing a hand gently on a sick person, one Christian may pray for the sick person to be healed. Jesus did this.<sup>472</sup>

The power to heal comes from God's authority. God's authority comes to us through the Holy Spirit.

A few years ago I saw a man cured of terminal cancer. Jesus

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<sup>469</sup> Numbers 8:10, Numbers 27:18-23, Deuteronomy 34:9

<sup>470</sup> Acts 6:3-6, Acts 13:2-3

<sup>471</sup> 1 Timothy 5:22

<sup>472</sup> Mark 7:32-34, Luke 5:13

touched the sick man when a disciple laid his hands on the man. The disciple stretched himself out on the floor, placed his hands on the sick man's feet and prayed for him to be healed from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. The prayer was answered.

God's authority inside the praying Christian, healed the sick man of terminal cancer. I was there. I saw it happen. The doctors could not explain how the man was healed. But the doctors knew this—they knew it was a miracle.

As a result of the miraculous healing, the healed man's entire family became Christian converts. His family included all his cousins, nieces, nephews, brothers and sisters, and their spouses. All together about one-hundred people. It was a great day for the kingdom.<sup>473</sup>

The disciple who laid hands on the sick man did God's work via God's power. As the Bible promises, disciples of Christ Jesus "will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."<sup>474</sup>

Whenever I sense the Holy Spirit telling me to lay hands on someone for healing, I usually ask them if I may gently touch their shoulder and pray a blessing over them. I also tell them that we are asking Jesus to heal them.

If the sick person is an unbeliever, I ask Jesus to heal them so

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<sup>473</sup> Luke 15:10

<sup>474</sup> Mark 16:18 NASB

they will know He is real, and He is really God. When combined with the laying on of hands, this prayer is powerful.

## Blessing

It is Biblical for Christian fathers to bless their children by laying hands on them.<sup>475</sup> A father may do this by placing a hand or two gently atop his child's head and praying good things over them. This is how the patriarch Jacob blessed his grandsons.<sup>476</sup>

Every Friday before dinner I place my hands atop my children's heads and bless them. They enjoy it. They say my hands feel warm.

Jesus blessed little children by laying His hands on them.<sup>477</sup>

When you see a Christian man giving a little boy a gentle pat on his head, the man might be giving the boy a quiet blessing. If you are led to do so by the Holy Spirit, you can bless children too.

Sometimes the baptism of the Holy Spirit is given by the laying on of hands.<sup>478</sup> Sometimes spiritual gifts are given by the laying on of hands.<sup>479</sup>

The only time to lay hands on someone is when you sense the Holy Spirit wants you to do it.<sup>480</sup> Never be hasty to perform

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<sup>475</sup> Genesis 48:14-16

<sup>476</sup> Genesis 48:12-20

<sup>477</sup> Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17

<sup>478</sup> Acts 8:17, Acts 9:17, Acts 19:6

<sup>479</sup> 1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 1:6-7

<sup>480</sup> 1 Timothy 5:22

this special rite. God is all powerful. Work in unity with Him.

Our God can heal, bless, and give the baptism of the Holy Spirit without the laying on of hands.<sup>481</sup> It is always best to be obedient. It is always best to let God be God.<sup>482</sup> Be sure God wants you to lay hands on someone before you do it.

When the Holy Spirit tells you to do something and you obey, you do God's work by God's power. Doing God's work by God's power is in a real sense, the laying on of hands. It is working in unity with God.

If you are baptized with the Holy Spirit then you can do God's work by God's power. Turning new believers into beginner disciples is God's work. Do it by God's Power.

## **Prayer:**

*Jesus, help me to do God's work by God's Power. If you want me to lay hands on someone and give them Your healing or blessing or some other form of godly power or authority, I will. If you want me to receive godly power through the laying on of hands, I will receive it. Thank you for helping me do Your will. Amen.*

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<sup>481</sup> Acts 10:44-48  
<sup>482</sup> 1 Samuel 15:22



# THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

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## Greatly Mistaken

The Lord Jesus Christ says those who think life ends when the body dies are “greatly mistaken.”<sup>483</sup> There is a life to come when life in this world ends.

The resurrection of the dead is a basic principle that encourages us to press on. This hopeful doctrine is the fifth ingredient to spiritual milk. Converts need this hope. You can give it to them.

The Bible explains what happens “to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope.”<sup>484</sup>

## We Have A Hope

Believers whose bodies die go home to be with Jesus.<sup>485</sup> In other words, Christians go to heaven. In heaven Jesus has pre-

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<sup>483</sup> Mark 12:27 NASB; Matthew 22:29-32

<sup>484</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:13 NLT

<sup>485</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:14

pared a home for us.<sup>486</sup> We do not believe as atheists believe, that when the body dies, life ends. Let me explain.

## Three Parts

Because you are a Christian, you have three parts; a spirit, a soul and a body.<sup>487</sup> When your body quits living, it returns to dust.<sup>488</sup> But your spirit and soul go to heaven.

The soul is your personality. It's your mind, emotions and will. The soul is the real-you.

The spirit part of you is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives life to your soul so when your body dies, the real-you goes to heaven.

Because atheists and other unbelievers do not have the Holy Spirit, their souls are dead before their bodies die. Since the real-them is dead, they belong to the kingdom of death. They belong to Satan and their home is in hell.

But you have the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is life.<sup>489</sup> Until the moment the Holy Spirit came into you, "you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins."<sup>490</sup> But now you are alive with Christ Jesus forevermore. Hallelujah!

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<sup>486</sup> *Philippians 3:20-21, John 14:2*

<sup>487</sup> *1 Thessalonians 5:23*

<sup>488</sup> *Genesis 3:19, Psalm 90:3, Ecclesiastes 3:20*

<sup>489</sup> *John 6:63, 1 Peter 3:18, Galatians 6:8*

<sup>490</sup> *Ephesians 2:1 NLT*

## The Return

Jesus will return.<sup>491</sup> When Jesus returns, the bodies of those who died will be resurrected to life.<sup>492</sup> The bodies of righteous people and evil people will come back to life.<sup>493</sup>

The bodies of Christians will be glorified in the same manner as Jesus' resurrected body.<sup>494</sup> Christians who have not died but are alive on earth when Jesus returns will rise up "to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord."<sup>495</sup>

This foundational principle of Christianity is full of hope. Be encouraged.

## The Dead Will Rise

When the resurrection of the dead occurs, none who have lived on earth will be left behind in the grave.<sup>496</sup> Even people lost at sea will be resurrected.<sup>497</sup> One day God will raise up everyone's body.<sup>498</sup> This will happen at the end of the age, whenever that is.<sup>499</sup>

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491 *Luke 21:25-28, Hebrews 9:28*

492 *1 Corinthians 15:52*

493 *Acts 24:15*

494 *Philippians 3:21, 1 Corinthians 15:42-44,*

495 *1 Thessalonians 4:17 NET*

496 *Revelation 20:12*

497 *Revelation 20:13*

498 *1 Corinthians 15:12*

499 *1 Thessalonians 4:16, 2 Timothy 2:18*

## Righteous and Unrighteous

After the dead are brought back to life, Jesus will divide all people into two groups. One group will be the righteous. The other group will be the unrighteous.<sup>500</sup> All who are saved are righteous.<sup>501</sup> The righteous have the righteousness of Jesus.<sup>502</sup> The unrighteous are unsaved. They never called out to Jesus.

Jesus saves repentant sinners. When Jesus saves repentant sinners, Jesus gives them His righteousness.<sup>503</sup> Righteousness is a free gift of God.<sup>504</sup>

Righteousness does not come from anything we do or do not do.<sup>505</sup> It is not earned. It is not a reward. Righteousness never comes from church membership or from being good or religious. Righteousness is given to all who call upon the name of the Lord.<sup>506</sup>

The Bible says being righteous means being saved.<sup>507</sup> The Bible says that those who receive Jesus' gift of righteousness will spend eternity in glory with Jesus. The Bible says the unrighteous however, will face judgment and that judgment will not go well with them.<sup>508</sup>

Following the resurrection of the dead, everyone will be

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500 *Matthew 25:32-33*

501 *Acts 4:11-12*

502 *Romans 3:22*

503 *Philippians 3:9*

504 *Romans 5:17*

505 *Romans 3:21-22*

506 *Romans 3:22, Romans 5:15-16, Romans 6:23*

507 *Romans 1:17, Romans 4:5, 2 Corinthians 5:21*

508 *John 5:28-29*

judged by Jesus.<sup>509</sup> This leads us into the sixth and final elementary Christian principle— eternal judgment.

### **Prayer:**

*Lord Jesus, help me understand that the grave is not the end of any man. Put in my heart the fact that every person will be resurrected, some to glory with You and some to eternal judgment. Give me a passion to see men saved, and to see saved men made into Your disciples. Amen.*

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<sup>509</sup> Romans 14:10-12, John 5:28-29



# ETERNAL JUDGMENT

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## Judge Caprio

**A judge in Rhode Island is world-famous for getting to the heart of the matters before him and for issuing his decisions with empathy.** His name is Judge Frank Caprio.<sup>510</sup>

Judge Caprio's father immigrated to America from Italy. Judge Caprio's father earned a living pushing a fruit cart through the city of Providence, Rhode Island. Judge Caprio himself worked three jobs while attending school. He understands hardship.

When Judge Caprio judges a case, he tries to take every circumstance into consideration. Often Judge Caprio helps poor people pay the fines he levies against them. He encourages those who are working to get out of poverty and he applauds good citizenship. Judge Caprio is an amazing judge. But Jesus is a better judge.

Jesus judges perfectly.

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510 The Honorable Francesco "Frank" Caprio, Providence Municipal Court, Providence, Rhode Island, USA, b. 1936

## Judge Jesus

At the Eternal Judgment when Judge Jesus renders a decision, you and I might look at one another and whisper, “Judge Caprio could not have done any better. Jesus gave a perfect judgment. That fellow got exactly what he deserved.”

If we do comment on Judge Jesus’ decisions, we will not say anything different. We will only say, “That judgment was perfect.” And we will mean it and we will be right. Jesus judges perfectly.

Until Jesus sits as Judge and the Eternal Judgment takes place, it may look like wicked people go unpunished and righteous people go unrewarded.<sup>511</sup> Do not let this bother you. When Jesus sits as Judge, everything will be set exactly right.<sup>512</sup> Everything. Count on it. One day everything will be made right. I am looking forward to that day.<sup>513</sup> What a day it will be!

## The Sixth Basic Principle

Eternal judgment is Christianity’s sixth basic principle.<sup>514</sup> Eternal Judgment is the last ingredient that makes spiritual milk. You must teach this basic Christian principle to converts.

As regards our life on this earth, the Bible says “our goal is to please Him. For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil

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<sup>511</sup> Revelation 22:11-12

<sup>512</sup> Luke 16:22-26

<sup>513</sup> Proverbs 31:25

<sup>514</sup> Revelation 20:12-13



we have done in this earthly body.”<sup>515</sup>

‘Good’ is what is godly, and ‘evil’ is everything else.

After the resurrection of the dead, the eternal judgment will take place. At the eternal judgment every person who has ever lived will be judged by Jesus.<sup>516</sup> Each person will be judged for every deed they did and every word they spoke.<sup>517</sup> Sins that people do are called ‘sins of commission.’

People will also be judged for ‘sins of omission.’ Sins of omission are the things people were supposed to do but didn’t do, and things they were supposed to say but lacked the gumption to say.

When the time for eternal judgment comes, there will be no more second chances to go back and undo what was wrongly done or do what should have been done. Once a man leaves this world, there are no more opportunities for repentance. That’s it.

Before that day of judgment comes, however, it remains a different story. If a man earnestly repents for his sins before the day of judgment then his sins will be forgiven by Jesus. When a man’s sins are forgiven, his evil deeds are forever dealt with.<sup>518</sup> Forgiven sins no longer exist.<sup>519</sup> They are erased from the heavenly records.

<sup>515</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:9b-10 NLT

<sup>516</sup> Romans 14:10-12, John 5:28-29

<sup>517</sup> Daniel 12:2, John 5:28-29, Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:15

<sup>518</sup> Isaiah 1:18

<sup>519</sup> Psalm 103:12

## No Record of Forgiven Sins

The repentant man cannot be judged for sin that has been forgiven because forgiven sin no longer exists. When a man repents of wicked deeds, those deeds are under the blood of Jesus. When sin is under the blood of Jesus, God has no record of them. The forgiven man is a righteous man. A righteous man is right with God. He stands before the Judge as if he never sinned.

Men, women, and children whose sins are forgiven will inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>520</sup> Those who did evil however, will receive eternal death in a lake of fire.<sup>521</sup>

If you have repented of your sins and done what you can to make things right with those you hurt, do not let Satan afflict you with false guilt. The blood of Jesus is sufficient to cleanse you of all sin.

The Bible says, "But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin."<sup>522</sup> 'All' means all.

No matter how small or seemingly insignificant an act may be, no deed will be hidden from God's judgment.<sup>523</sup> Everyone

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520 *Matthew 25:34*

521 *John 5:28-29, Matthew 25:46*

522 *1 John 1:7 NLT*

523 *Romans 14:10-12*

will be rightly judged.<sup>524</sup> Nobody gets away with evil, and no righteous deed goes unrewarded.

Jesus judges perfectly.

Count on it.

## **Prayer:**

*King Jesus, one day You will judge all men for what they have done, what they have said, and what they have thought. You will also judge everyone for what they should have done and should have said. Help me to always view life through the lens of eternal judgment. Thank You for helping me be a faithful disciple. Amen.*

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<sup>524</sup> Hebrews 4:15



# GO ALL THE WAY

**Converts can be turned into beginner disciples in one day.** It will take a little planning and some prayer but you can do it.

You or a small team can organize a one-day conference that walks converts through the six elementary principles of Christianity so that by nightfall the new believers are beginner disciples.

New believers do not need to know every detail about all six elementary principles to begin following Jesus. God is merciful. The basics will jump-start them. You can do it. Jesus will help.

## **What's Next?**

After a believer becomes a beginner disciple, some might wonder what comes next in a Christian's life. That is a reasonable question.

The key scripture for this book, Hebrews 6:1-2, tells us the

answer. It tells us that after receiving an understanding of the six foundational principles we are to “go on to maturity.”

“Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings (baptisms), the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.”<sup>525</sup>

To “go on to maturity,” we follow Jesus by listening to and obeying the Holy Spirit. As we follow Jesus, in a spiritual sense we climb the narrow trail up the mountain of God. With each upward step, we draw nearer to God. As we spiritually climb higher and higher we are transformed from glory to glory.<sup>526</sup>

Among us are zealous men and women who will not stop until they summit God’s mountain. These bold adventurers will gladly give their lives to go all the way with Jesus. You can join their ranks. In this world in this life, you can go all the way with Jesus. Simply listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and obey Him no matter what comes. That is how you go all the way with Jesus. Go all the way. There is nothing like it.

## **Prayer:**

*Jesus, help me go all the way with You. Amen.*

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525 Hebrews 6:1-3 ESV  
526 2 Corinthians 3:18

# ADDENDUM

## **One Way to Perform Water Baptism**

**Water baptism is an important milestone in the life of every Christian.** What follows is one way to perform water baptism. This is not the only way.<sup>527</sup>

A convert can be baptized in a tub, pool, lake or river. Any place where the water is deep enough for the person to go under the water, will work. In the Bible the word ‘baptize’ usually means ‘immersion.’ Immersion means to go under the water.

If you are in a dry place with not much water to be found, your options for water baptism may be limited. When water is scarce, water may be poured onto the convert’s head. It is the hearts of those involved that is important, not how much water is used for the baptism.

Before a convert is water baptized, ask them to tell you their story of repentance. Have them recount that time in their

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<sup>527</sup> *How to Perform a Water Baptism*; Dr. Paul E. Paino; [www.ministrymaker.com/water-baptism-guide](http://www.ministrymaker.com/water-baptism-guide); viewed April 13, 2021; *The Last Reformation* ([thelastreformation.com](http://thelastreformation.com)), “Fighting for the Gospel, True Baptism.”

life when Jesus first became their Savior. If they do not have a story like that, possibly they never repented of their sins. Maybe they never really became a convert.

If that's the case, explain to them the good news of Jesus' death and how His unjust death takes the place of the eternal death they deserve. Then ask them if they would like to ask Jesus to take their punishment of death for them. Jesus saves repentant sinners.

When you ask people to share their story of when they trusted Jesus to save them, some may say Jesus has been their Savior for as long as they can remember. This can be a truthful claim. Two of my daughters say this. They both say they have known Jesus for as long as they can remember. Knowing my daughters as I do, I believe them.

Once a person repents of their sins and trusts Jesus to save them, he or she may be water baptized. Water baptism is only for people who turn from doing evil and hope in Jesus. The Bible says repentance goes hand-in-hand with water baptism.<sup>528</sup>

If a child is being baptized, speak to the parents. Let the father decide if the child is ready for baptism. If the father is not present, ask the mother. Young children may be shy. Young children may not be able to tell you what they said at home.

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<sup>528</sup> Acts 2:38



With the parents there, explain to the child what water baptism means. When the child understands water baptism, ask him if he wants to be baptized. If the child says yes and the parents agree, baptize the child.<sup>529</sup>

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.”<sup>530</sup> We never stop children from coming to Jesus. Never.

After explaining everything, ask if anyone has questions. Take your time answering their questions. If you do not know the answer, say that you do not know. Later you can find the answer for them. Your truthfulness will show them how to be truthful. Your humility will show them how to be humble.

When there are no more questions, use one convert to show the others how the baptism works. Then tell the converts how to line up to go into the water. Put them in the order you want. You may need one or two Christians to help the converts into and out of the water, and more people to help them return to the dressing areas and come back again.

Explain to those who help, how important their job is. Water baptism is a serious rite. You and your helpers are turning

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<sup>529</sup> *Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:14, Luke 18:16*

<sup>530</sup> *Matthew 19:14 NLT*

converts into disciples. You are changing lives. You are obeying King Jesus.

Once the converts are lined up at the baptism site and you are ready, explain to those gathered what water baptism means. There may be converts watching who have not been water baptized. There may be unsaved people present who need to hear the truth that Jesus only saves repentant sinners. Then pray aloud.

Ask the Holy Spirit to bless each convert as they are water baptized and ask Him to separate the converts from everything associated with their old life. He will do it. The more specific the convert is when confessing the sins of his or her old life, the more effective the water baptism will be at separating them from any demons that may have a grip on them as a result of those sins.

When you are ready, have the first convert join you in the water. You and the convert face the people. Ask the convert if he has repented of his sins and if he is trusting the Lord Jesus Christ to save him from the death his sins deserve. The convert answers yes. You and the convert should if possible, speak loudly enough for those watching to hear.

Ask the convert if he wants to be water baptized. If the convert answers yes, ask if he (or she) wants to live a totally new

life in Christ Jesus. If the convert answers yes, gently place your right hand on the back of his neck.

If appropriate, put your left arm in front of the convert. Tell him to gently hold onto your arm with both hands.

Then say the convert's name, adding, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."<sup>531</sup> Or you might use the name above all names, "the Lord Jesus Christ." Then say, "You are dead with Christ. You are raised alive in Christ."

As you say these last words, gently press down on the convert's neck. This signals the convert to go down into the water. The convert stays under the water until you gently raise him back up.

If they confessed old sins before baptism then the demons associated with that sin and confession must leave. Command the demons to leave. If the person's face or voice changes, do not be afraid. Be strong and courageous!<sup>532</sup> God will help you get rid of every unclean spirit.<sup>533</sup>

If the unclean spirit does not immediately leave, tell it that the person now belongs to Jesus. Tell the bad spirit the person has repented and the blood of Jesus has washed the person

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<sup>531</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>532</sup> Joshua 1:9

<sup>533</sup> Psalm 46

clean. Tell the bad spirit that Jesus' blood is on it. Evil spirits hate the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus is more powerful than any demon.

You may have to command it several times to go. Do not have a conversation with the evil spirit. Command it to leave in Jesus' name. Be strong, do not give up. The Holy Spirit will help you win the battle. You cannot fail.

Young Christian men often have a gift of making these things leave because young men are strong for the battle.<sup>534</sup> Young men are fierce spiritual warriors who will not quit until they win.

You know the evil spirit is gone when the person looks calm and joyful again. When the person is free of the unclean spirit, rejoice with him or her. If appropriate, give them a hug.

After it is all over you may need to explain to the people gathered what happened. Tell them not to be afraid. Getting Christians free of unclean spirits is normal Christianity. A number of 'critters' have been evicted out of me. I am glad they are gone.

My wife recently found a certificate of baptism that I was given at the age of seven. It made her joyful, she noticed I was baptized on her birthday. Holding the baptism certificate in my hand, I told my family about my baptism in a public swimming pool fifty years ago.

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<sup>534</sup> 1 John 2:14, Proverbs 20:29

I am glad Jesus is the great King.<sup>535</sup> There is no king like Jesus!<sup>536</sup>

## **Prayer:**

*Jesus, if you want me to water baptize new believers, I will do it. Help me perform the water baptism in a way that pleases You and blesses the new believer. Thank you for giving me the courage to obey You no matter what. Amen.*

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<sup>535</sup> John 18:37, Revelation 19:16

<sup>536</sup> *That's My King*; Dr. S.M. Lockridge; [www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzqTFNfeDnE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzqTFNfeDnE); viewed May 3, 2021



# HOW THIS BOOK GOT ITS NAME

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**During worship one evening I watched a story unfold in my mind's eye.** I saw myself walking down the beach at night. I was on the east coast of Florida. The ocean was to my left so I knew I was heading south. The dark sky showed hints of morning light. I could hear the waves breaking on the shore better than I could see them.

Beyond the breakers the ocean was steel gray and flat as an iron. There were no houses by the shore, just Florida jungle. The only sound I could hear was waves breaking. Walking, I looked out over the ocean in the direction where the sun would soon rise.

Towards the horizon I saw a great wave building. The wave was massive, a tsunami. As the wave built up and rolled towards the shore, I rose high in the air. It was no longer dark. Morning light filled the sky.

From up high I could see across Florida. I saw from the Atlantic coast beneath me all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. The tsunami wave rolled under me. The wave gently played itself out across the Florida peninsula almost reaching the Gulf of Mexico.

As the wave's water receded into the Atlantic Ocean and washed into the Gulf, the risen sun began to shine brightly. In the sunshine I noticed that people had been washed ashore by the wave. The washed-ashore people had been in the ocean but now they were on the land. They lay where the water dropped them, soaking wet. Many were injured. All were dazed. As I looked, I realized the great wave had carried millions of people up out of the ocean and then dumped them across the Florida peninsula. Washed-ashore people were everywhere.

As the millions of people began to move slowly about, soldiers arrived on foot and busily gave them first aid. The soldiers giving first aid were not really soldiers but they moved like soldiers. They acted like soldiers.

The washed-ashore people needed first aid to walk to the aid stations further away. Some washed-ashore people needed hospitals. All needed encouragement. The soldiers were busy helping the injured and dazed people. As I watched the soldiers help the people, I heard God loudly say, "First aid for converts!"

When God said, "First aid for converts," I knew the soldiers



were not real soldiers giving physical aid to injured people. The soldiers were really disciples giving spiritual first aid to new converts.

When I heard God speak those four words, I also knew He was telling me the title of the book you are now reading, *First Aid for Converts*. The content of this book is 'first aid' for converts. You can give first aid to converts. As a soldier of God, you can teach new believers the six basic principles of Christianity. This book will help you. God will help you. In the U.S. Army, every soldier is taught first aid. In God's Army, every disciple is a soldier, and every soldier can give spiritual first aid. The vision continued.

From where I was up in the air, I saw mountains far away. The mountains were in the American Midwest somewhere. There are no natural mountains I know about in the American Midwest, so I knew that the distant mountains were spiritual mountains. The mountains I saw were the mountains of God. The sun began to shine on the top of the tallest peak. The sight of the sun on the mountain peak was beautiful.

Looking back down at Florida, I noticed that the soldiers gave the washed-ashore people enough first aid to get them walking. Some of the people just needed a word of encouragement to start moving. Others needed all the aid the soldiers were equipped to provide. A few needed carrying in stretchers.

Once a washed-ashore person was standing up and able to walk, the soldiers pointed him or her in the direction of the far-away mountains, the mountains of God. Then the soldiers gave the new convert a word of encouragement. With a sincere smile, the soldiers sent the convert off towards the mountains. Even if the washed-ashore person could only limp, the soldiers sent them off. Then the soldiers headed to help the next person who had been washed ashore by the wave. These soldiers helped as many people as they could. They did not quit working.

In the vision the soldiers kept giving first aid until all the people who had been washed ashore were up on their feet and walking towards the mountains of God. When the soldiers had no more people to help, they too began walking towards the mountains. I saw all this from high above.

As I watched I knew some of the soldiers giving first aid had in time past traveled to the mountains of God and then returned on their mission. Other soldiers had not made it all the way to the mountains yet. Now they were all going to the mountains. Everybody was walking to the mountains of God.

Not everyone traveled the same way to the mountains. Some went up this road or through that town. Others went other ways by different roads. But everybody headed to the mountains. The pathways people traveled to the mountains deter-

mined what spiritual strengths they had, and healings they received along their journey.

Different places along the way to the mountains had different groups of believers. Different believers had different spiritual strengths. The cities and towns and roadside rest stops I saw represented differing Christian groups. Each group was empowered by God to do something a little different.

As all the travelers were led by the Spirit, everyone received what they most needed as they traveled. Believers encamped along the way ministered to the travelers as they were empowered. They could only give away what God had given them, and that was enough.

Some of the people in the towns and stops along the way had been to the mountains of God. After climbing the mountains, they had returned to help others. These who had scaled the heights and then returned to help the travelers were great Christian leaders. Most who assisted the great leaders were believers who paused along their journey.

In the Bible, the sea often represents worldly people and the dry land often represents God's people. The great wave that washed all the people ashore may have been God bringing in some of what the Bible calls, 'the great harvest.' The soldiers providing first aid were disciples turning converts into begin-

ner disciples. The soldiers were people like you. You can turn converts into disciples. God will help you.

The church's biggest job will soon be turning new converts into beginner disciples. You are called to help bring the coming harvest from the fields into God's barn.<sup>537</sup> With God's power, you can help make new believers into beginner disciples. With the Holy Spirit, you can do it.

You will provide first aid for converts. You will make disciples of Jesus. The Holy Spirit will help you. Amen.

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<sup>537</sup> *Matthew 13:30*



